Wessex Poems

and other Verses —

by

Thomas Hardy.

with 32 Illustrations by the author.

FRONTISPIECE

"... At mothy curfew-tide,
They've a way of whispering to me."
FRIENDS BEYOND. p. 7

[Wessex Poems]

Preface.

Of the miscellaneous collection of verse that follows, only four pieces have been published, though many were written long ago, & others partly written. In some few cases the verses were turned into prose & printed as such, it not having been ~~foreseen~~ anticipated at that time that they might ~~be printed~~ see the light.

Whenever an ancient & legitimate local word, for which there was no equivalent in received English, suggested itself as the most natural, nearest, & often only expression of a thought, it has been made use of.

The pieces are in a large degree dramatic or personative in conception; & this even where they are not obviously so.

The dates attached to some of the poems do not apply to the rough sketches ~~that illustrate them~~, given in illustration, but which have been recently made.

T. H.

September: 1898.

The Temporary the All.

Change & chancefulness in ~~*~~ my bloothing youthtime
Set me sun by sun near to one unchosen;
Wrought us fellowly, & despite mistetners
Friends inter~~course~~ knit us.

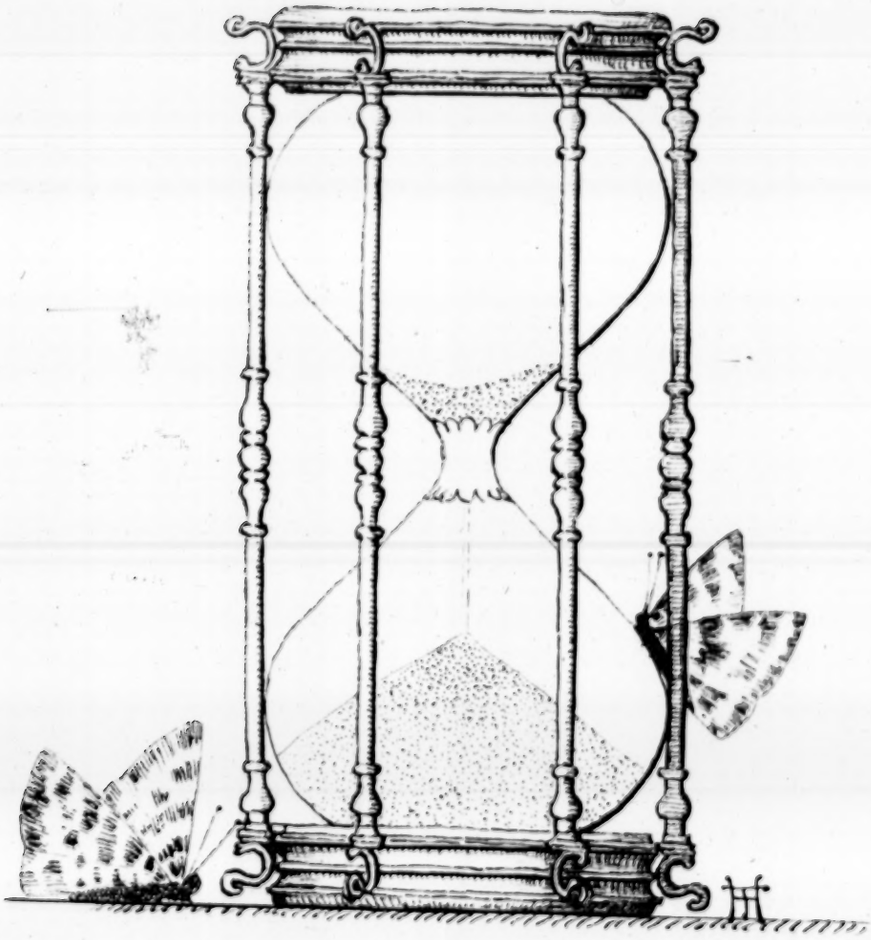
"Cherish him can I while ~~I~~ the true one forthcome —
Come the rich fulfiller of my prevision;
Life is roomy yet, & the odds unbounded."
So self-communed I.

Thwart my wistful way did a damsel saunter,
Fair not fairest, good not best of her feather;
"Maiden meet," held I, "till arise my forefelt
Wonder of women."

Long a visioned hermitage deep desiring,
Tenement uncouth did I fain abide in;
"Let such lodgment be for a breath-while," thought I,
"Soon a more seemly.

"Then achievement large will I make my life-deed,
Truth & Light outshow; but- the ripe time pending
~~Intermissive~~ intermissive aim at the thing sufficeth."
~~So~~ Thus I.... But woe me,

Mistress, friend, ~~unseen~~ home; ~~dead~~ aims to be bettered forthwith,
Bettered not have I by the full in each kind;
They as tokens sole of my sorry earth-way
Stand in their ~~peanness~~ scantness!



Amabel.

I marked her ruined hues,
Her ~~unlovely orbs of~~ faded iris blues,
And asked, 'Can there indwell
My Amabel?'

Knowing that though love care,
Love's race shows undecrease;
All find in dorp or dell
An Amabel.

I looked upon her gown,
Once rose, now earthen brown;
The change was like the knell
Of Amabel.

— I felt that I could creep
To some housetop, & weep
That Time the Tyrant fell
Ruled Amabel!

Her step's mechanic ways
Had lost the life of May's;
Her laugh, ~~once sweet in swell~~ ~~which every pelt~~
Spoilt Amabel.

I said (the while I sighed
That love like ours had died)
"Sweet things I'll no more tell
To Amabel,

I mused: "Who sings the strain
I sang ere warmth did wane?
Who thinks its numbers spell
His Amabel?" —

"But leave her to her fate,
And ~~fare~~ cry across the gate,
Till the Last Trump, farewell
O Amabel!' "

1866.

Chance.

If but some vengeful god would call to me
From up the sky, & laugh: "Thou suffering thing,
Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,
That thy love's loss is my hates profiting!"

Then would I bear, & clench myself, & die,
& Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited,
Half-cased, too, that a Powerful Man I
Had willed & meted me the tears I shed.

But not so. How arrives it joy lies slain,
And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?
— Crass Casualty obstructs the sun & rain,
And dicing Time for laughter casts a moan.....
These purblind Doomsters had as readily strown
Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain!

1866.

"In vision I roamed."

In vision I roamed the flashing Firmament,
So fierce in blazon that the Night waxed wan
As though with an awed sense of such ostent;
And as I thought my spirit ranged on & on

In footless traverse through ghast heights of sky
To the last chambers of the monstrous dome,
Where stars the brightest here ~~to~~ darkness die:
Then, any spot on our own Earth seemed Home!

And the sick grief that you were far away
Grew pleasant thankfulness that you were near,
Who might have been, set on some outstep sphere,
~~Lest~~ Less than a Want to me as ~~ever~~ day by day
I ~~slumbed have lived~~ unaware, uncaring all that lay
~~Hid~~ Locked in that Universe taciturn & drear.

1866.

At a Bridal.

When you paced forth, to wait maternity,
A dream of other offspring held my mind,
Compounded of us twain as Love designed;
Rare forms, that corporate now will never be!

Should I, too, wed as slave to Mode's decree,
And each thus found apart, of false desire,
A stolid line, whom no high aims will fire
As had fired ours could ever have mingled we;

And, grieved that lives so matched should miscompose,
Each mourn the double waste; & question dare
To the Great Dame whence incarnation flows
Why those high-purposed children never were:
What will she answer? That she does not care
If all such aimed ideals have such a close.

1866.

Postponement.

Snow-bound in woodland, a mournful word,
Dropt now & then from the bill of a bird,
Reached me from windward; & this I heard,
Wearily waiting:—

"I planned her a nest in a leafless tree,
But the passers eyed & twitted me,
And said: 'How reckless a bird is he,
'Dreaming of mating!'

"Stricken, I stayed till ~~I stayed me, & hoped of~~ the summer-tide,
In ~~death of~~ leaves to ~~house~~ her bride;
But alas! her love for me waned & died,
Wearily waiting.

"Ah, had I been like some I see,
Born to an evergreen nesting-tree,
None had eyed & twitted me,
Dreaming of mating!"

1866.

A Confession
To a Friend in trouble.

~~(A Confession to Ophiuchus)~~

Your troubles shrink not, though I feel them less
Here, far away, than when I ~~lodged~~ lingered near;
I even smile old smiles — with listlessness —
Yet smiles they are, not ghastly mockeries mere.
A thought too strange to house within my brain
Haunting its outer chambers I discern:
— That I will not show zeal again to learn
Your griefs, & sharing them, renew my pain.....
It goes, like murky bird or buccaneer
That shapes its lawless flight on the main,
And each new impulse tends to make outflee
The unseemly instinct that had lodgment here:
Yet comrade old, can bitterer knowledge be
Than that, though banned, such instinct was in me!

1866.

Neutral Tones.

We stood by a pond that winter day
And the sun was white, as though chidden of God.
And a few leaves lay on the withered sod;
— They had fallen from an ash, & were gray.

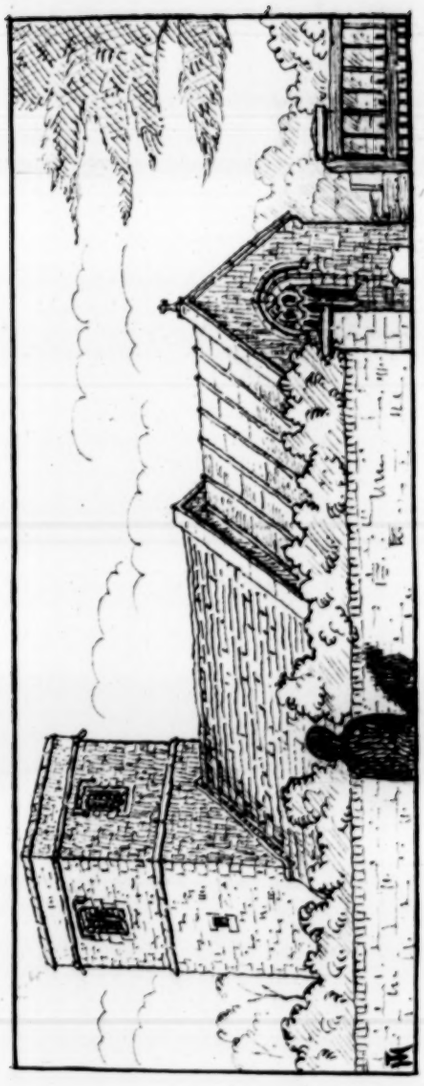
Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove
Over tedious riddles solved years ago;
And some words played between us to and fro —
On which ~~had~~ the more lost ~~wrecked~~ by our love.

The smile on your mouth was the deadest thing
Alive enough to have strength to die;
And a grin of bitterness swept thereby
Like an ominous bird a-wing.....

Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,
And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me
Your face, & the God-curst sun, & a tree,
And a pond, edged with grayish leaves.

1867.

9. A.



Head piece to "At his funeral"

reduce to about 3½ inches

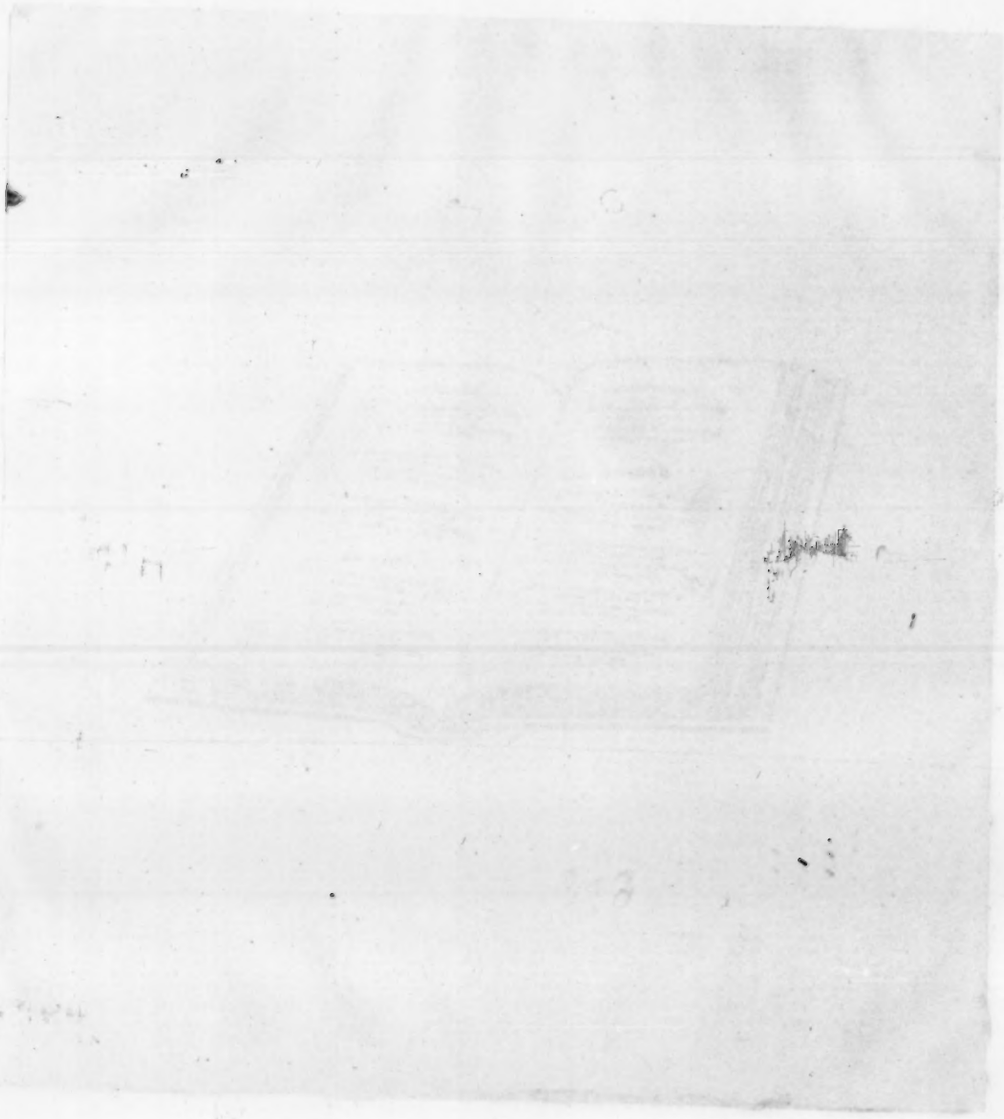
She
At his Funeral.

They bear him to his resting-place —
In slow procession sweeping by;
I follow at a stranger's space;
His kindred they, his sweetheart I.
Unchanged my gown of garish dye,
Though sable-sad is their attire;
But they stand round with griefless eye,
Whilst my regret consumes like fire.

187--.

1=2

Headpiece w. "Her Initials"

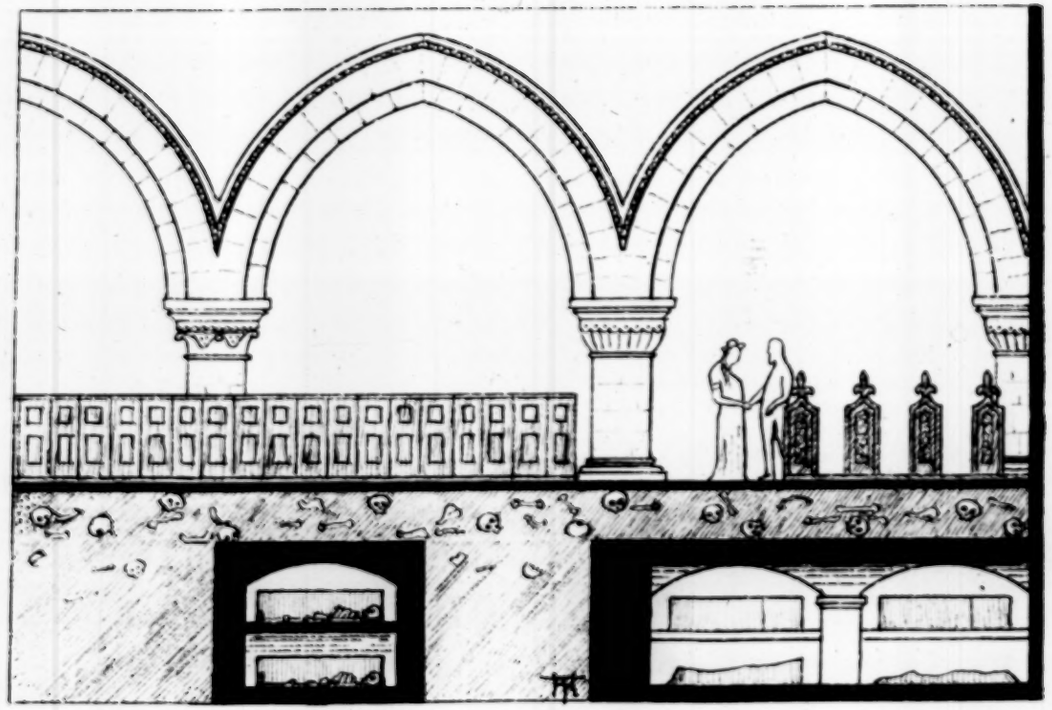


Her Initials.

Upon a poet's page I wrote
Of old the initials of her name,
For she seemed woven of the thought
Whence that high singer's rapture came.
— When now I turn the leaf the same
~~Perennial~~ Immortal light illumes the lay,
But from the margin-written name
The radiance has died away.

1869.

1 = 2



Her Dilemma.

(In ——— Church.)

The two were silent in a sunless church,
Whose mildewed walls, uneven paving-stones,
And wasted carvings, passed antique research;
And nothing broke the clock's dull monotones.

Leaning against a wormy poppyhead,
So wan & worn that he could scarcely stand,
— For he was soon to die — he softly said,
"Tell me you love me!" — holding hand her hand.

She would have given a world to breathe "yes" truly,
So much his life seemed hanging on her mind,
And hence she lied, her heart persuaded thoroughly
'Twas worth her soul to be a moment kind.

But the sad need thereof, his nearing death,
So mocked humanity that she shamed to prize
A world conditioned thus, or care for breath
Where nature such dilemmas could devise.

1866.

Revulsion.

Though I waste watches framing words to fetter
Some spirit to mine own in clasp & kiss,
Out of the Night there looms a sense 'twere better
To fail obtaining whom one fails to miss.

For winning love we win the risk of losing.
And losing love is as one's life were riven;
It cuts like contumely & keen ill-using
To cede what was superfluously given.

Let me then feel no more the fateful thrilling
That devastates the love-worn wooer's frame,
The hot ado of severed hopes, the chilling
That agonizes disappointed aim!
So may I live no junctive law fulfilling
And my heart's table bear no woman's name.

1866.

She, to him.

I.

When you shall see me lined by tool of Time,
My lauded beauties carried off from me,
My eyes no longer stars as in their prime,
My name forgot of Maiden Fair & Free;

When alienation comes of heart & mind,
And judgment, though you scarce its process know,
Recalls the excellencies ~~it~~ I once enshrined,
And you are irked that they have withered so:

Remembering that with me lies not the blame,
That Sportsman Time but rears his brood to kill,
Knowing me in my heart the very same —
One who would die to spare you touch of ill;
Will you not ~~cede~~ grant to old affection's claim
The hand of friendship down Life's sunless hill?

1866.

She, to him

II.

Perhaps long hence, when I have passed away,
Some other's feature, accent, thought like mine,
Will carry you back to what I used to say,
And bring some memory of your love's decline.

Then you may pause awhile, & think, "Poor Maid!"
And yield a sigh to me — as gift benign,
Not as the tittle of a debt unpaid
To one who could to you her all resign —

And thus reflecting, you will never see
That your thin thought, in two small words conveyed,
Was no such fleeting phantom-thought to me,
But the Whole Life wherein my part was played;
And you amid its pitiful masquerade
A Thought — as I in yours but seem to be.

1866.
Prosed in "Desperate Remedies".

She, to Him

III.

I will be faithful to thee; aye, I will,
And Death shall choose me with a wondering eye
That he did not discern & domicile
One his by right e'ersince that last Good-bye!

I have no care for friends, or kin, or prime
Of manhood who deal gently with me here;
Amid the happy people of my time
Who work their love's fulfilment, I appear

Numb as a vane that cankers on its point,
True to the wind that kissed ere canker came;
Despised by souls of Now, who would disjoint
The mind from memory, & make Life all aim.

My old dexterities of hue quite gone
And nothing left for Love to look upon.

1866.

3

She: to him.

LV.

This love puts all humanity from me:
I can but maledict her, pray her dead
For giving love, & getting love of mee —
Feeding a heart that else mine own had fed!

How much I love I know not, life not known,
Save as some unit I would add love by;
But this I know, my being is but mine own —
Fused from its separateness by ecstasy.

And thus I grasp thy amplitudes, & her
Ungrasped, though helped by nigh-regarding eyes;
Canst thou then hate me as an error
Who see unrecked what I so dearly prize?
Believe me, Lost One, Love is lovelier
The more it shapes its moan in selfish-wise.

1866.

Ditty.

(E. L. G.)

Beneath a knaps where flown
Nestlings play,
Within walls of weathered stone,
Far away
From the piles of formal houses,
By the bough the frisking browses,
Lives a Sweet: no merchants meet,
No man barters, no man sells
Where she dwells.

Upon the ~~fronting~~ fabric fair
"Here is she!"
Seems written everywhere
Unto me.
But to friends & nodding neighbours,
Fellow wights in lot & labours,
Who descry me times as I,
No such ~~thoroughfared~~ lucid legend tells
Where she dwells.

Should I lapse to what I was
In days by;
(Such can not be, but because
Some loves die
Let me feign ~~beg~~ it) – none would notice
That where she I know by rote is
Spread a strange & withering change,
Like a drying of the wells
Where she dwells.

To feel I might have kissed –
Loved as true –
Otherwhere, nor Mine have missed
My life through,
Had I never wandered near her,
Is a smart severe – severer
In the thought that she is nought
Even as I, beyond the dells
Where she dwells.

And devotion droops her glance
To recall
What bond servants of chance
We are all.
I but found her in that, going
On my errant path unknowing,
I did not outskirt the spot
By the breadth of some few clls
Where she dwells.

1870.

3 : 1

The Sergeant's Song.
(1803.)

When Lawyers strive when a breach,
And Parsons practise what they preach:
Then Little Boney he'll pounce down
And march his men on London town!
Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lorum,
Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lay.

When Justices hold equal scales,
And Rogues are only found in jails;
Then Little Boney he'll pounce down,
And march his men on London town!
Rollicum-rorum, &c.

When Rich Men find their wealth a curse,
And fill therewith the Poor Man's purse;
Then Little Boney he'll pounce down,
And march his men on London town.
Rollicum-rorum, &c

When Husbands with their Wives agree,
And Maids wont wed from modesty;
Then Little Boney he'll pounce down,
And march his men on London town!
Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lorum,
Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lay.

1878.

Published in "The Trumpet-major." 1880.

Headpiece to "Valenciennes"

(very slightly Diminish)

Valenciennes.

(1793.)

By Corp'l Tullidge: vide "The Trumpet-Major".

In memory of [illegible] S. C. Died 184–.

'We bugled, trumpeted, & drummed,
And [illegible] from our mortars tons of iron hummed
Ath'art the ditch, the month we bombed
The Town o' Valenciëën.

"'Twas in the June o' Ninetydree
(The Duke o' York our then commander beën)
The German Legion, Guards, & we
Laid siege to Valenciëën.

"This was no first time in the war
That French & English spilt each other's gore;
— God knows what years will still the roar
Begun at Valenciëën!

"'Twas said that we'd no business there
A-topperèn the French for disagreën;
However, that's not my affair —
We were at Valenciëën.

"Such devilish din, since war began
Never knew raw recruit or veterân:
Stone deaf thereafter walked many a man
Who served at Valenciëën.

Into the streets, ath'art the sky,
A hundred thousand balls & bombs were fleën;
And harmless townsfolk fell ~~to die~~
Each hour at Valencieën!

And, sweatèn wi' the bombardiers
A shell was rent to rags aneth mine ears:
—'Twas near the end of hopes & fears
For me at Valencieën!

They bore my wounded frame to camp,
And shut my gapèn skull, & washed en cleän,
And jined en wi' a zilver clamp
Thik night at Valencieën.

"'We'v fetched en back to quick from dead;
But never more on earth ~~and~~ while rose is red
Will drum rouse Corpel!' Doctor said
O'me at Valencieën.

'Twer true. No voice o' friend, or foe,
Can reach me now, or any livèn beën;
And little have I power to know
Since then at Valencieën.

I never hear the zummer hums
O' bees; & don' know when the cuckoo comes;
But night & day I hear the bombs
We threw at Valencieën.....

As for the Duke o' York in war,
There be some folk whose judgment o'en is meän;
But this I say — 'a was not far
From great at Valenciëën.

O' wild wet nights, when all seems sad
My wownds come back, as though new wownds I'd had;
But yet — at times I'm sort o' glad
I fout at Valenciëën.

Well: Heaven wi' its jasper halls
Is now the on'y Town I care to be in.....
Good Lord, if Nick should bomb no walls
As we did Valenciëën!

1878—1897.

San Sebastian.

(August, 1813.)

In memory of Sergeant M——. Died 184-.

"Why, Sergeant, stray on the Ivel Way,
As though at home there were speeches ripe?
From first to last 'twas a proud career!
And your ~~placed~~ sunny years with a gracious wife
Have brought you a daughter dear.

"I ~~marked~~ watched her to-day; a more comely maid,
As she danced in her muslin bowed with blue,
Round a Hintock maypole never gayed."
"— Aye; aye; I ~~marked~~ watched her this day, too,
As it happens", the Sergeant said.

"My daughter is now", he again began,
"Of just such an age as one I knew
When we of the Line, in the Foot-Guard van,
On an August morning — a chosen few —
Stormed San Sebastian.

"She's a score less three; so about was she —
The maiden I wronged in Peninsular days.....
You may prate of your prowess in lusty times,
But as years gnaw inward you blink your bays,
And see too well your crimes!

"We'd stormed it at night, by the flapping light
Of burning towers, & the mortars boom:
We'd scaled the breach; but had failed to stay,
For our files were misled by the ~~misty~~ baffling gloom;
And we said we'd storm by day.

"So, out of the trenches, their features set,
On that hot, still morning, in measured pace,
Our column climbed; climbed higher yet,
Past the pauss'bray, scarp, up the curtain face,
And along the parapet.

"From the battered hornwork the cannoneers
~~Heaved~~ Hove crashing balls of iron fire;
On the quaking breach mount the volunteers
In files, & as they mount expire
Amid curses, groans, & cheers.

"Five hours did we storm, five hours re-form
As Death cooled ~~each~~ those hot blood pricked on;
~~As when Courage advanced were by death withdrawn;~~
Till our cause was helped by a woe within;
They swerved from the summit we'd leapt upon,
And (we) madly entered in.

"Intent on plunder, 'mid rain of thunder
That burst with the lull of our cannonade,
We thridded the streets in the stifling air —
Our hunger unsoothed, our thirst unstayed —
And ransacked the buildings there.

"Down the stony steps of the house-front white
We rolled rich puncheons of Spanish grape,
Till at length, with the fire of the wine alight,
I saw at a doorway a fair fresh shape —
A woman, a sylph, or sprite.

"Dismayed she fled, & with heated head
I pursued to the chamber she called her own;
— When might is right no qualms deter,
And having her helpless & alone
I wreaked my lust on her.

"She raised her beseeching eyes to me,
And I heard the words of prayer she sent
In her own soft language..... Seemingly
I copied those eyes for my punishment
In begetting the girl you see!

"So; to-day I stand with a God-set brand
Like Cain's, when he wandered from kindred's ken....
I served through the wars that ~~not~~ made Europe free;
I served me in peace-year. But, hid from men,
I bear that mark on me.

"And I nightly stray on the Ivel way
As though at home there were species rife;
I delight me not in my proud career;
And ~~it is~~ 'tis coals of fire that a gracious wife
Should have brought me a daughter dear!"

The Stranger's Song.

(As sung by Mr Charles Charrington in the play of "The Three Wayfarers".)

O my trade it is the rarest one,
Simple shepherds all —
My trade is a sight to see;
For my customers I tie, & take 'em up on high
And wapt 'em to a far countree!

My tools are but common ones,
Simple shepherds all —
My tools are no sight to see:
A little hempen string, & a post whereon to swing,
Are implements enough for me!

To-morrow is my working-day,
Simple shepherds all —
To-morrow is a working day for me:
For the farmer's sheep is slain, & the lad who did it ta'en,
And on his soul may God ha' mer-cy!

"Printed in "The Three Strangers" 1883.

Heartpiece to "The Burghers"
(Reproduce same size)

Friday

The ~~Hum~~ Burghers.)

(17—)

The sun had wheeled from Grey's to Dammer's Crest;
And still I mused on that Thing imminent:
At length I sought the High-street to the West.

The level flare raked pane & pediment
And my wrecked face, & shaped my nearing friend
Like one who walked the Furnace-fire unshent.

"I've news concerning her," he said. "Attend.
They fly to-night at the late moon's first gleam:
Watch with thy steel: two righteous strokes will end

Her lawless visions & his passioned dream.
I'll watch with thee, to testify thy wrong—
To aid, maybe.— ~~Law~~ Law sanctifies the scheme."

I started, & we paced the flags along
Till I replied: "Since it has come to this
I'll do it. But alone. I can be strong."

Three hours past Curfew, when no Froom's mild hiss
Reigned sole, undulled by whirr of merchandise,
From Pummery-Town to where the Gibbet is

I crossed my ~~pleasances~~ pleasaunce hard by ~~Glyd Gibbets~~ Glyd'path Rise,
And stood beneath the wall. Eleven strokes went,
And to the door they came, contrariwise,

And met in clasp so close I had but bent
My lifted blade upon them to have let
Their two souls loose upon the firmament.

But something held my arm. "A moment yet
As pray-time ere you wantons die!" I said;
And then they saw me. Swift her gaze was set-

With eye & cry of love illimited
Upon her Heart-king. Never upon me
Had she thrown look of love so thoroughsped!.....

And then she flung her faint form shieldingly
On his, against the vengeance of my vows;
The which o'erruling, her shape shielded he.

Blanked by such love, I stood as in a drowse,
And the slow moon edged from the upland nigh.
My sad thoughts moving thiswise: "I may house

And I may husband her, yet what am I
But licensed tyrant to this bonded pair?
Says Charity, Do as ye would be done by".....

Flinging my iron to the bushes there
I bade them stay. And as if brain & breast
Were passive, they walked with me to the stair.

Inside the house none watched; & on we prest
Before a mirror, in whose gleam I read
Her beauty, his; & mine own mien unblest;

Till at her room I turned. "madam", I said,
"Have you the wherewithal for this? Pray speak;
Love fills no cupboard. You'll need daily bread."

"We're nothing, sire," said she; "and nothing seek.
'Twere base in me to rob my lord unware;
Our hands will earn a pittance week by week."

And then I saw she'd piled her raiment rare
Within the garderobes, & her household purse,
Her jewels, & least lace of personal wear;

And stood in homespun. Now grown wholly hers
I handed her the gold, her jewels all,
And him the choicest of her robes diverse.

"I'll take you to the doorway in the wall,
And then Adieu," I to them. "Friends, withdraw."
They did so; & she went — beyond recall.

And as I paused beneath the arch I saw
Their moonlit figures — slow, as in surprise —
Descend the slope, & vanish on the haw.

"'Fool', some will say," I thought. "But who is wise,
Save God alone, to weigh my reasons why?"
—"Hast thou struck home?" came with the boughs' night-sighs.

It was my friend. "I have struck well. They fly,
But carry wounds that naught can cicatrize."
—"Not mortal?" said he. "Lingering — worse," said I.

Leipzig.

(1813.)

Scene: Interior of the Old Ship Inn, Castlebridge. Evening.

"Mr Norbert with the flat blue cap—
A German said to me—
'My lad, your pipe die on your lap,
Your eyes blink absently.'

"Ah..... Well, I had thought till my cheek was wet
By my mother—her voice a-trill
When she used to sing a pirouette
And touse the tambourine

"To the march that upon Street fiddles plays
She told me 'twas the same
She'd heard from the trumpets of the Allies
When their troops their city came

"My father was one of the German Hussars,
My mother of Leipzig; and he,
Long quartered here, pitched her ear close to the wars
And a Wessex lad reared me.

"And as I grew up, again & again
She'd tell, at her knitting, that air,
Of her youth, of the battles on Leipzig plain
And of all that was suffered there.....

"'—Twas a time of alarms. Three chiefs at arms
Combined them to crush One.
And by numbers' might, for in equal fight
He stood the matched of none.

"Carl Schwartzenburg was of the plot,
And Blücher, prompt & prow,
And Jean the Crown-Prince Bernadotte:
Buonaparte was the foe.

"City & plain had felt his reign
From the North to the Middle Sea,
And he'd now sat down in the noble town
Of the King of Saxony.

"October's deep dews ~~o'erwet old~~ sprinkled Leipzig's purlieus
And ramparts of ashlar hewn,
Beneath whose fronts fair avenues
Made eve of afternoon.

"To westward two dull rivers crept
Through miles of marsh & slough,
Whereover a streak of whiteness swept—
The Bridge of Lindenau.

"Hard by, in the City, the One, care-crossed,
Gloomed over his narrowing powers:
And without the walls the encircling host
Waxed denser with the hours.

"He had speech that night on the morrow's designs
With his chiefs by the bivouac fire,
While the zone of flames from the enemy's lines
Flared nigher him yet & nigher.

"Three sky-signs then from the girdling trine
Told, 'Ready!' As they rose
Their lightnings seemed his judgment-signs
For bleeding Europe's woes.

"'Twas seen how the French watch-fires that night
Glowed still & steadily,
And the Three rejoiced; for they read in the sight
That the One disdained to flee.....

"Five hundred guns began the affray
On next day morn at nine;
Such mad & mangling cannon-play
Had never torn human line.

"Around the town three battles beat,
Constricting like a gin;
And nearer marched the myriad feet
Of columns closing in.

"The first battle sighed on the low Southern side;
The second by the Western way;
The roaring of the third on the North was heard;
— The French held all at bay.

"Against the first band did the Emperor stand;
Against the second stood Ney;
Marmont against the third gave the order-word:
Thus was it throughout the day.

"Sixty thousand harmless souls on those girdling plains & knolls,
Who met the dawn hopefully,
And were lotted their shares in a quarrel not theirs
Dropt then in their agony.

"'O', the old folks said, 'ye preachers stern!
O so called Christian time!
When will men's spears to ploughshares turn?
When come the promised prime?'.....

"The clash of horse & man which that day began
Closed not as evening wore;
And the morrow's armies, rear & van
Still mustered more & more.

"From the City towers the Confederate Powers
Were marked in glittering lines,
And up from the vast a murmuring passed
As from a wood of pines.

"'"'Tis well to cover a feeble skill
By numbers!' scoffed He,
But give me a third of their strength force, I'd fill
Half Hell with mere soldiery!'

Hannah

"All that day raged the war they waged,
And another hushed night held reign,
Save that ever upspread from the wide death-bed
Dull monotones of pain.

"Hard had striven brave Ney, the true Bertrand,
Victor, & Augereau,
Bold Poniatowski, & Lauriston,
To stay their overthrow,

"But, as in the dream of one sick to death
There comes a narrowing room
That pens him, body & limbs & breath,
To wait a hideous doom,

"So to Napoleon, in the hush
That held the town & towers
Through these dire nights; a creeping crush
Seemed nearing with the hours.

"One track from the cincture, & but one,
Did pitiful Chance allow;
'Twas where the Pleiss' & Elster run
The Bridge of Lindenau

"The nineteenth dawned. By ~~Dom~~ street & Platz
The writhing French sank back,
Stretching long lines across the Flats
And on the bridge-way track;

"When there surged on the sky an earthen wave,
And stones, & men, as though
Some rebel churchyard crew upcrave
Their sepulchres from below.

"To Heaven is blown Bridge Lindenau;
Wrecked regiments reel therefrom;
And rank & file in masses plough
The sullen Elster-Strom.

"A gulf was Lindenau; & dead
Were fifties, hundreds, tens;
And every current rippled red
With Marshalls's blood & mens.

"The smart Macdonald swam therein
And barely won the verge;
Bold Poniatowski plunged him in
Never to re-emerge.

"Then stayed the strife. The remnants wound
Their Rhinewardway pell-mell;
And thus did Leipzig cry sound
An Empire's passing bell;

"While in cavalcade, with band & blade,
Came Marshals, Princes, Kings;
And the town was theirs..... Ay, as simple maid
My mother saw these things!

"And whenever those notes in the street begin
I recall her; & that far scene,
And her acting of how the Allies marched in,
To the house of her tambourine!"

9 = 10

The Peasants Confession.

"Si le maréchal Grouchy avait été rejoint par l'officier que Napoléon lui avait expédié la veille à dix heures du soir, toute question eût disparu. Mais cet officier n'était point parvenu à sa destination, ainsi que le maréchal n'a cessé de l'affirmer toute sa vie, et il faut l'en croire, car autrement il n'aurait eu aucune raison pour hésiter. Cet officier avait-il été pris? avait-il passé à l'ennemi? ~~C~~ C'est ce qu'on a toujours ignoré."

Thiers. Histoire de l'Empire. "Waterloo".

Good Father!.... 'Twas an eve in middle June,
And war was waged anew
By great Napoleon, who for years had strewn
Men's bones all Europe through.

Three nights ere this, with columned corps he'd crossed
The Sambre at Charleroi,
~~To move on Brussels, where the English host~~
~~And drave him from beyond the marches~~
Allied in Pare de Bois.
~~By Frasnes & Villeret.~~

The yestertide we'd heard the gloomy gun
Roar through the long-sunned day
From Quatre-Bras & Ligny; till anon
Silence enwrapt the fray.

Leipzig

And at next noon-time Grouchy slowly passed
With thirty thousand men:
We hoped thenceforth no army, small or vast
Would trouble us again.

My hut stood deeply in a ~~bower~~ vale recessed,
And never a soul seemed nigh
When, ~~And~~ re-assured at length, we went to rest—
My children, wife, & I.

But, what was this that ~~woke~~ broke our humble ease?
What noise, above the rain,
Above the dripping of the poplar trees
That smote along the pane?

A call of mastery, bidding me arise,
Compelled me to the door,
Whereat a horseman stood in martial guise—
Splashed—sweating at every pore.

Had I seen Grouchy? Yes? Which track took he?
Could I lead thenceward on?
Fulfilment would ensure gold pieces three,
Perchance more gifts anon.

"I bear the Emperor's mandate," then he said,
"Charging the Marshal straight
To strike between the double host ahead
Ere they co-operate,

And at next noon-time Grouchy slowly passed
With thirty thousand men:
We hoped thenceforth no army, small or vast
Would trouble us again.

My hut stood deeply in a ~~wood~~ vale recessed,
And never a soul seemed nigh.
When, re-assured at length, we went to rest—
My children, wife, & I.

But what was this that broke our humble ease?
What noise, above the rain,
Above the dripping of the poplar trees
That smote along the pane?

A call of mastery, bidding me arise,
Compelled me to the door,
Whereat a horseman stood in martial guise—
Splashed—sweating at every pore.

Had I seen Grouchy? Yes? Which track took he?
Could I lead thenceward on?
Fulfilment would ensure gold pieces three,
Perchance more gifts anon.

—

"I bear the Emperor's mandate," then he said,
"Charging the Marshal straight
To strike between the double host ahead
Ere they co-operate,

"Engaging Blücher till the Emperor put
Lord Wellington to flight,
And next the Prussians. This to set afoot
Is my emprise to-night."

I joined him in the mist; but, pausing, sought
To estimate his say.
Grouchy had made for Wavre; & yet, on thought,
I did not lead that way.

I mused: "If Grouchy thus instructed be,
The clash comes straight thereon;
My farm is stript. While, as for pieces three,
Money the French have none.

"Grouchy unwarned, moreover, the English win,
And mine is left to me—
They buy, not borrow."— Hence did I begin
To lead him treacherously.

By Joidoigne, near to east, as we ondrew,
Dawn pierced the humid air,
And eastward faced I with him, though I knew
Never marched Grouchy there.

Near Ottignies we passed, across the Dyle,
(Lim'lette left far aside),
And thence direct toward Perwez & Noville
Through green grain, till he cried:

"I doubt thy conduct, ~~lad~~ man! no track is here —
I doubt thy gagèd word!"
Thereon he scowled at me, & pranced me near,
And pricked me with his sword.

"Nay, Captain, hold! We skirt, not trace the course
Of Grouchy," said I then:
As we go, yonder went he, with his force
Of thirty thousand men."

— At length noon sighed; when west, from Saint-Johns-Mount,
A hoarse artillery boomed,
And from Saint Lambert's upland, chapel-crowned,
The Prussian squadrons loomed.

Then to the wayless wet gray ground he leapt:
"My mission fails!" he cried;
"Too late for Grouchy now to intercept,
For, peasant, you have lied!"

He turned to pistol me. ~~made to slay her sword~~. I sprang, & drew
The sabre ~~weapon~~ from his flank,
And 'twixt his nape & shoulder, ere he knew,
I struck, & dead he sank.

I hid him deep in nodding rye & oat —
His shroud green stalks & loam:
His requiem the corn-~~bird's~~ blade's husky note —
And then I hastened home.....

Jamrah

—Two armies writhe in coils of red & blue,
And brass & iron clang
From Gommont past the front of Waterloo
To Papelotte & Smohain.

The Guard Imperial wavered on the height;
The Emperor's face grew glum;
"I sent" he said, "to Grouchy yesternight,
And yet he does not come!"

'Twas then, Good Father, that the French espied
Streaking the summer land
The men of Blücher. But the Emperor cried,
"Grouchy is now at hand!"

And meanwhile Vand'leur, Vivian, Maitland, Kempt,
Met D'Erlon, Friant, Ney;
But Grouchy — mis-sent, blamed, yet blame-exempt —
Grouchy was far away.

By even, slain or struck, Michel the strong,
Bold Travers, Drops, Delord,
Smart Guyot, Reil-le, l'Heritier, Friant,
Scattered that champaign o'er.

Fallen likewise wronged Duhesme, & skilled Lobau
Did that red sunset see;
Colbert, Legros, Blancard!.... And of the foe
Picton & Ponsonby;

With Gordon, Canning, Reignolds, Ompteda,
L'Estrange, Delancey, Packe,
Hay, Howard, D'Oyly, Stables, Macara,
Von Scheverin, Lettlow, Bock,

Smith, Phelips, Cameron, Lind, & Battersby,
And hosts of rankesmen round:....
Memorials linger yet to witness thee
Of those who bit the ground!

The Guards' last column yielded; dykes of dead
Lay between vale & ridge,
As, thinned yet closing, faint yet fierce, they sped
In throngs to Genappe Bridge.

Safe was my stock; my milkwhite cow unslain,
Intact each cock & hen;
But Grouchy far at Wavre all day had lain,
And thirty thousand men.

O Saints, had I but lost my earing corn
And saved the cause once prized;
O Saints, why such false witness had I borne
When late I'd sympathized!.....

So now, being old, my children eye askance
My slowly dwindling store,
And crave my mite; till, worn with tarriance,
I care for life no more.

To Almighty God henceforth I stand confessed
And Virgin-Saint Marie:
O Michael, John, & Holy Ones in rest,
Intreat the Lord for me!

9=10

The Alarm. [redacted].

(1804)

vide "The Trumpet-major."

In memory of one of the writer's family who was a Volunteer during the war with Napoleon.

In a ferny byway
Near the great South-Wessex Highway
A homestead raised its breakfast-smoke aloft;
The dew-damps still lay steamless, for the sun had made no skyway,
And twilight cloaked the croft.

'Twas hard to realize on
Hitherside the snug horizon
That beyond it hostile armaments might steer,
Save from this, that in the porchway a fair woman wept with eyes on
A harnessed volunteer.

In haste he'd flown there
To his comely wife alone there
While marching south hard by, ~~[illegible]~~, to still her fears,
For she soon would be a mother, & few messengers were known there
In these campaigning years.

'Twas time to be Good-bying,
For the assembly-horn was nighing
In regal Budmouth Town at six that morn;
And betwixt the port & this retreat were ten good miles of hieing
Ere ring of bugle-horn.

"I've laid in food, Dear,
And broached no cask of brewed, Dear:
And if our July hope should ~~be~~ antedate,
The lad will mount a gallop by the cut through Yalbury Wood, Dear,
And fetch assistance straight.

"As for Buonaparte, forget him:
He's not like to land! But let him,
Those strike with aim who strike for wives & sons!
And the war-boats built to float him; 'twere but wanted to upset him
A slat from Nelson's guns!

"But, to assure thee,
And of creeping fears to cure thee,
If he should be rumoured anchoring in the Road,
Drive under tilt to Weatherb'ry: let nothing thence allure thee
Till we've him safe-bestowed.

"Now; to turn to marching matters:—
I've my knapsack, firelock, spatters,
Cross-belts, priming-horn, stock, bay'net, blackball, clay;
Pouch, magazine, flints, flintbox that at every quick-step clatters;
.... My heart, Dear; that must stay!"

—With breathings broken
Farewell was kissed unspoken,
And they parted there as morning stroked the panes:
And the volunteer went on, & turned, & twirled his glove for token;
And took the coastward lanes.

When above He'th-Hills he found him
He saw, on gazing round him,
Rain-Barrow's Beacon burning — burning low,
As if, perhaps, uplighted ever since he'd homeward bound him;
And it meant: Expect the Foe!

Leaving the byway,
And following swift the highway,
Cars & chariots met he, hasting hot inland;
"He's landed, Soldier!" cried the throng. "God save thee, marching thy way,
Th'lt front him on the Strand!"

Stressed for his dear he faltered
~~As sharps~~ awhile with self, and faltered:
"Why courting misadventure shoreward roam?
To Molly, surely! Seek the words with her till times have altered;
Charity favours home.

"Else, my denying
He would come may read as lying —
She will think the Beacon must have met my eyes;
That my words were not my un-wit, but deceit of her, while trying
My life to jeopardize.

"At home is stocked provision,
And to-night, without suspicion,
We might bear it with us to a covert near:
Such sin, to save a chilling wife, would earn it Christ's remission,
Though none forgive it here."

Hardy

3 While thus he, thinking,
A little bird, quick drinking
Among the crowfoot tufts the river bore
Was tangled in their stringy arms, & fluttered, well-nigh sinking
Hard by, upon the Moor.

He stepped in, reached, & seized it,
And, preening, had released it
But that a thought of Holy Writ occurred,
And Signs Divine era Battle, till it seemed him Heaven had pleased it
As guide to send the bird.

"O Lord, direct me!....
Doth Duty now expect me
To march a-coast, or guard my weak ones near?
Give this bird a flight according, that I thence know to elect me
The southward, or the rear."

He loosed his clasp; when, rising,
The bird — as if surmising —
Bore due to southward, crossing by the Froom,
And Durnover Great-Field & Fort, the soldier clear advising —
Prompted he knew by Whom.

Then, on he panted
Through Casterbridge, & slanted
Up the steep Ridge-way, hearkening betwixt whiles;
Till, nearing coast & harbour he beheld the shore-line planted
With Foot & Horse for miles.

Mistrusting not the omen
He gained the ~~Forth~~ beach, where Yeomen,
Militia, Fencibles, & Pikemen bold,
With Regulars in thousands, were enmassed to meet the Foemen,
Whose fleet had not yet shoaled.

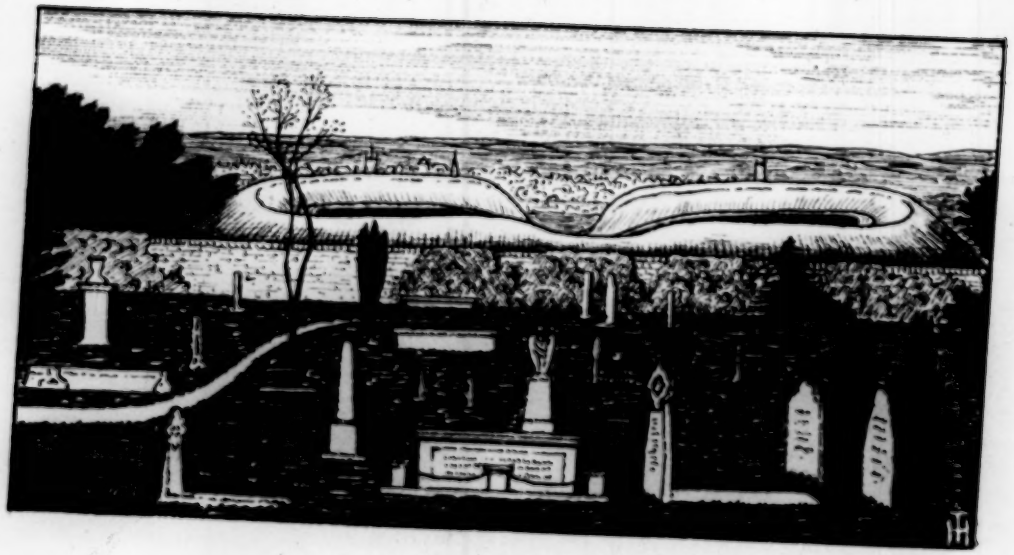
Captain & Colonel,
Sere Generals, Ensigns vernal
Were there; among them Stickland, Mitchell, Smith,
Meggs, Bingham, Gambier, Cunningham, roused by the said nocturnal
Swoop on their land & Kith.

But Buonaparte still tarried,
His project had miscarried;
At the last hour, equipped for victory,
The fleet had paused; his subtle combinations had been parried
By English strategy.

Homeward returning
Anon, no beacons burning,
No alarms, the volunteer, in modest bliss,
Te Deum sang with wife & friends: "We praise Thee, Lord, discerning
That Thou hast helped in this!"

9-10

Mid-picture to "The Alarm"



Her Death & After.

'Twas a dead-cold summons, & forth I went
By the way of the Western Wall, so dear
On that winter night, & sought a gate —
The home, by Fate
Of one I had long held dear.

And there, as I passed by her tenement,
And the trees shed on me their rime & hoar,
I thought of the man who had left her lone —
Him who made her his own
When I loved her, long before.

The rooms within had the piteous shine
That which home-things wear which the housewife miss:
From the stairway floated the feeble ~~moo~~ fall
Of an infant's call,
Whose birth had brought her to this.

Her life was the price she would pay for that wine —
For a child by the man she did not love:
"But let that rest for ever", I said,
And bent my head
To the chamber up above.

She took my hand in her thin white one,
And smiled her thanks — though nigh too weak —
And made them a sign to leave us there;
Then faltered, ere
She could bring herself to speak.

"'Twas to see you before I go — he'll condone
Such a natural thing now my time's not much —
When Death is so near it hustles hence
All passioner sense
Between woman & man as such!

"My husband is absent. As heretofore
The City detains him. But, in truth,
He has not been kind..... I will speak no blame,
But — the child is lame;
O, I pray she may reach his ruth!

"Forgive past days — I can say no more —
Maybe if we'd wedded you'd now repine!.....
But I treated you ill. I was punished. Farewell!
— Truth shall I tell?
Would the child were yours & mine!

"As a wife I was true. But, such my unease
That, could I insert a dead back in Time,
I'd make her yours, to secure your care,
And the scandal bear,
And the penalty for the crime."

When I had left, & the swaying trees
Rang above me, as landing her candid say,
Another was I. Her words were enough:
Came smooth, came rough
I felt I could live my day.

slip 17

Next night she died; & her obsequies
In the Field of Tombs, by the Via renowned,
Had her husband's heed. His tendance spent,
I often went
And pondered by her mound.

All that year & the next year whiled,
And I still went bitterward in the gloaam;
But the Town forgot her & her nook,
And her husband took
Another Love to his home.

And the rumour flew that the lame lone child
Whom she'd wished for its safety child of mine
Was treated ill when offspring came
Of the new-made Dame,
And marked a more rigorous line.

A smarter grief within me wrought
Than even at loss of her so dear;
Dead he being whose soul my soul suffused,
Her child ill-used,
I helpless to interfere!

One eve as I stood at my spot of thought
In the Holy Garth, brooding thus her wrong,
Her husband neared; and to shun his view
In the hallowed mew
~~[illegible]~~
I went from the tombs among

To the Cirque of the Gladiators which faced —
That haggard mark of Imperial Rome,
Whose Pagan echoes mock the chime
Of your Christian time:
It was void, & I inward clomb.

Scarce had night the sun's gold touch displaced
From the vast Rotund & the neighbouring dead
When her husband followed; bowed; half-passed; —
With lips upcast;
Then, halting, sullenly said: —

"It is noised that you visit my first wife's tomb:
Now, I gave her an honoured name to bear
While living, when dead. So I've claim to ask
By what right you task
My patience by vigilling there?

"There's decency even in death, I assume;
Preserve it, Sir, & keep away;
The mother she of my firstborn, you
Show zest undue
In haunting her grave, I say."

A desperate strike discerned I then —
God pardon — or pardon not — the lie;
She had sighed that she wished (lest the child should pine
Of slights) 'twere mine,
So I said: "But the father I.

Faintly

"That you thought it yours is the way of men;
But I won her troth long ere your day:
You learnt how, in dying, she summoned me?
'Twas in fealty.
Sir; I've nothing more to say,

"Save that, if you'll hand me my little maid,
I'll take her, & rear her, & spare you toil;
Think it more than a friendly act you can;
I'm a lonely man,
While you've a large pot to boil.

"If not, & you'll put it to bail or blade —
To-night, to-morrow night, anywhen —
I'll meet you here..... But think of it,
And in season fit
Let me hear from you again."

Well: I went away, hoping; but nought I heard
Of my stroke for the child, till there greeted me
A little voice which one day came
To my window-frame
And babbled innocently: —

"My father who's not my own, sends word
I'm to stay here, Sir, where I belong."
Next a writing came: "Since the child was the fruit
Of your passion brute,
Pray take her, to right a wrong.

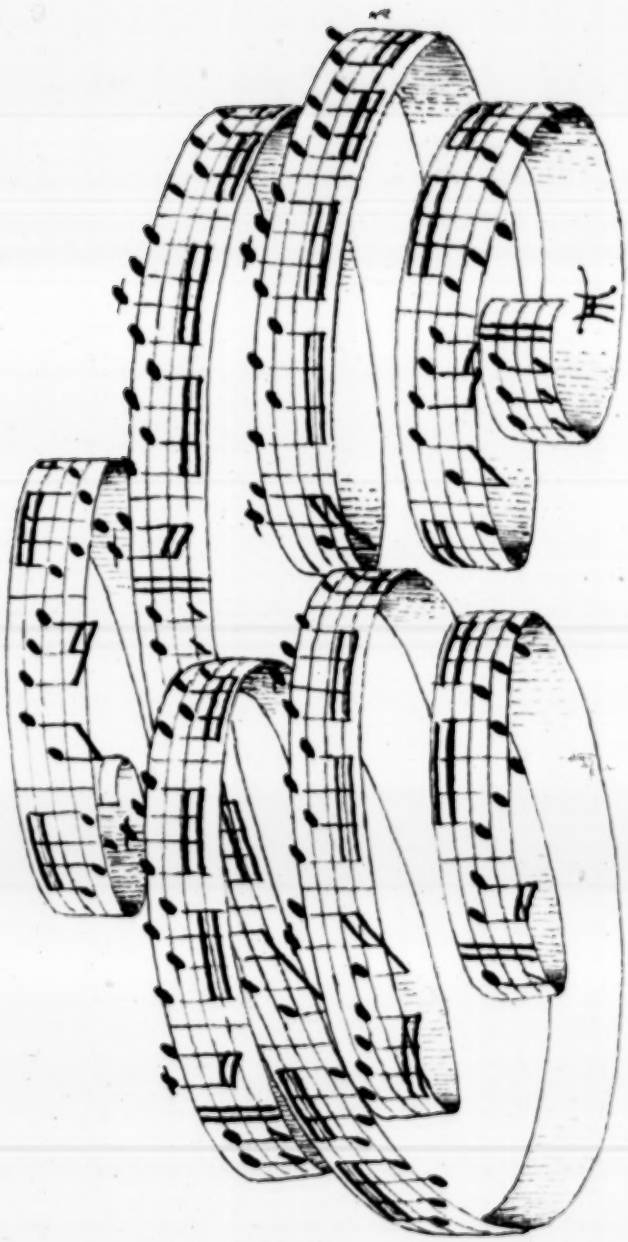
And I did. And I gave the child my love.
And the child loved me, & estranged us none.
But compunctions loomed; for I'd harmed the dead
By what I'd said
For the good of the living one.

Yet though, God wot, I am sinner enough,
And unworthy the woman who drew me so,
Perhaps this wrong for her darling's good
She forgives, or would,
If only she could know!

9 : 10

53A

Tailpiece to "Her Death & After" (reproduce same size)



Headpiece to 'The Dance of the Planets'

Drawn in 4 readings size -

The Dance at the Phœnix.

To Nelly came a gentle youth
From Wessex leazes lone;
His love ~~for her was bright as~~ was fresh as apple-bloom
~~In dael gardens grown~~ By g Paggett. Yeo. or Tone.
And daily he entreated her
To be his tender minister,
And call him aye her own.

Fair Nelly's life had hardly been
A life of modesty;
At Casterbridge experience keen
Of many loves had she
From scarcely sixteen years above;
Among them sundry troopers of
The King's-Own Cavalry.

But each with charger, sword, & gun
Had gone across the wave;
And Nelly ~~loved~~ prized her gentle one
For all the love he gave.
She vowed to be, if they were wed,
His honest wife in heart & head
From ~~bridal~~ bride-ale hour to grave.

Wedded they were. Her husband's trust
In Nelly knew no bound,
And Nelly kept her pure & just,
Till even malice found
No sin or sign of ill to be
In one who walked so carefully
The dutcous helpmate's round.

Two sons were born ~~to manhood grew~~ and grew to men
And roamed, & were as not:
Alone was Nelly left ~~once~~ again
As ere her mind had sought
A solace in domestic joys,
And ere the vanished pair of boys
Were sent to light her cot.

She numbered more than fifty years,
And passed as elderly,
When, in the street, with ~~sudden~~ flush of fears,
One day discovered she
From shine of swords & throb of drum
Her early lover from war had come,
The King's-Own Cavalry.

She turned aside, & bowed her head
~~Beneath~~ Anigh Saint Peter's door;
"Alas for chastened thoughts!" she said;
"I'm faded now, & hoar,
And yet those notes – they thrill me through,
And those gay forms ~~may dance before~~ move me anew
As in the years of yore!".....

'Twas Christmas, & the Phœnix Inn
Was lit with tapers tall,
For thirty of the trooper men
Had vowed to give a ball
As "Theirs" had done ('twas handed down)
When lying in the Belgian town
Ere Buonaparté's fall.

That might be throbbing "Soldier's Joy",
The measured tread & sway
Of "Fancy-Lad" & "maiden Coy"
Reached Nelly as she lay
Beside her spouse: till springtide blood
~~Seee~~ Seemed rushing through her like a flood
That whisked the years away.

She rose, & ~~dodged~~ rayed, & decked her head
To hide her ringlets thin:
She pranked her cap ~~with ribbons~~ with bows of red,
And ~~set gay bows~~ stuck rosettes therein;
Unheard descending to the street
She trod the flags with footing fleet,
And stood before the Inn.

Save for the dancers, not a sound
Disturbed the icy air;
No watchman on his midnight round
Or traveller were there:
But over All-Saints'* ~~bright~~ high & bright,
~~Bright~~ Pulsed to the music Sirius white,
The Wain by Bullstake Square.

She knocked, but found her further stride
Checked by a sergeant tall:
"Gay Granny, whence come you?" he cried,
"This is a private ball."
"— No one has more right here than me!
Ere you were born, man," answered she,
"I knew the regiment all!"

"Take not the lady's visit ill!"
~~Turn not, turn not the lady back!~~"
Upspoke the steward free.
"(Sufficient partners still we lack)
So, pri'thee let her be!"
They seized & whirled her 'mid the maze,
And Nelly felt as in the days
Of her immodesty.

Hour chased each hour, & night advanced;
She sped as shod with wings:
Each time & every time she danced—
~~Jigs, hornpipes~~ Reels, allemandes, & ~~Cumberlandeas~~, flings:
They cheered her as she ~~swirled~~ soared & swooped,
(~~For she had~~ She'd art in ere, learnt dancing drooped
From hops to slothful swings).

The "Fall of Paris" trilled its close,
And Peter's chime told four,
When Nelly, bosom-bursting, rose
To seek her silent door.
They tiptoed ~~escorted~~ in escorting her,
Lest stroke of heel or clink of spur
Should break her goodman's snore.

The fire that late had burnt fell slack
When lone at last stood she;
Her five & fifty years came back,
She sank upon her knee
Beside ~~Against~~ the burn
~~Before her gate~~; & like a dart
A something arrowed through her heart
In shoots of agony.

Their footsteps died as she ~~lay~~ regnt there,
Lit by the morning star
Hanging above the moorland, where
The aged elm-rows are;
And, as o'ernight erstwhile, from Pummery Ridge
~~that~~ To Maenbury Ring & Friary Bridge
No life stirred, near or far.

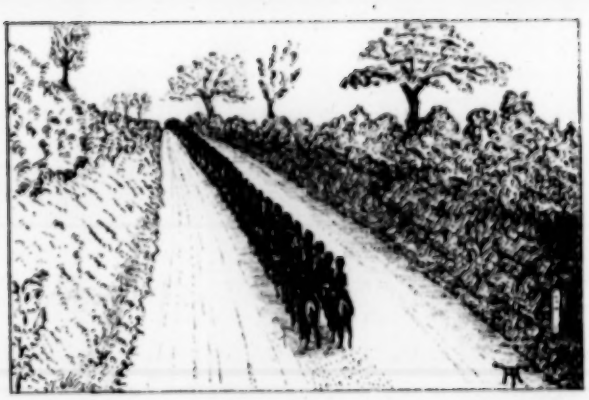
~~She stood, though heart-blood ebbed~~ Though inner anguish mischief worked amain,
She crawled to bed side
~~And reached her husband's side~~;
Where, toil-weary, as he had lain
Beneath the patchwork pied
When yestereve she'd thenceward crept,
And as unwitting, still he slept
Who did in her confide.

A tear sprang as she turned & viewed
His features free from guile;
She kissed him long, as when, just wooed,
She chose his domicile.
~~Death neighboured now~~; yet, more than life,
She craved ~~wished now~~ that she were still the wife
That she had been erstwhile.

Time wore to six. Her husband rose
And struck the steel & stone;
He glanced at Nelly, whose repose
Seemed deeper than his own.
With dumb dismay, on closer sight,
He gathered sense that in the night-
Or morn, her soul had flown.

When told that some too mighty strain
For one so heavy-yeared
Had burst her heart's intensest vein,
His doubts remained unstirred.
His Nelly had not left his side
Betwixt the eve & morning-tide:
—The King's said not a word.

Well: times are not as times were then,
Nor fair ones half so free;
And truly they were martial men
The King's-Own Cavalry.
And when they went from Casterbridge
And vanished over Melchester Ridge
'Twas saddest morn to see.



Tailpiece to "The Dance of the Phoenix"
(Reproduce same size.)

59. B

Headpiece to "The Canterbury Pilgrims".

(diminish (by about ⅓ an inch))

The Casterbridge Captains.
(Khyber Pass: 1842)

(In memory of L—, B—, & L—.) ~~of Casterbridge~~.

Three Captains went to Indian wars,
And only one returned:
Their mate of yore, he singly wore
The bays that all had earned.

At home he entered All-Saints' aisle,
Wherein, untrumpet of fame,
The three had sat in pupilage,
And each had carved his name.

The names, rough-hewn, ~~characters~~, of equal size,
Stood on the panel still;
Unequal since.—"'Twas theirs to aim,
Mine was it to fulfil!"

"Who saves his life shall lose it, friends!"
Outspoke the preacher then,
Answering the his listener, who
Looked at the names again.

That he had come, & they'd been stayed,
'Twas but the chance of war:
Another chance, & they'd sat here,
And he had lain afar.

Tailpiece to "Canterbridge Captains" Diminish to about half length & breadth

Yet saw he something in the lines
Of those who'd ceased to live
That marked them with a majesty
Which living failed to give.

Transcendent triumph in return
~~No longer lit his brain;~~
Transcendence rayed the lonely urn
~~Above the other tomb~~
Where slept the distant twain.

3 = 4

A Sign-seeker.

I mark the Months in liveries dank & dry,
The Day-tides many shaped & hued;
I know the nod of Night subdued,
And hear the monotonous Hours clang negligently by.

I view the evening bonfires of the Sun
On hills where morning rains have hissed;
The eyeless countenance of the Mist
Pallidly rising when the summer droughts are done.

I have seen the Lightning-blade, the leaping Star,
The cauldrons of the Sea in storm,
Have felt the Earthquake's lifting arm,
And trodden where abyssmal Fires & Snow-cones are.

I learn to prophesy the hid Eclipse,
The coming of eccentric orbs;
To mete the dust the sky absorbs,
To weigh the Sun, & fix the hour each Planet dips.

I witness fellow earth-men surge & strive;
Assemblies meet, & throb, & part;
Death's soothing finger, Sorrow's dart;
— All the vast various Moils that mean a world alive.

But that I fain would wot of ~~prospect~~ shuns my sense —
Those sights of which old prophets tell,
Those signs the general word so well,
Vouchsafed to their unheed, denied my watchings tense.

C. Walker

X

In graveyard green, behind his monument
* To glimpse a phantom parent, friend,
Wearing his smile, & "Not the end!"
Outbreathing softly: that were bleak enlightenment;

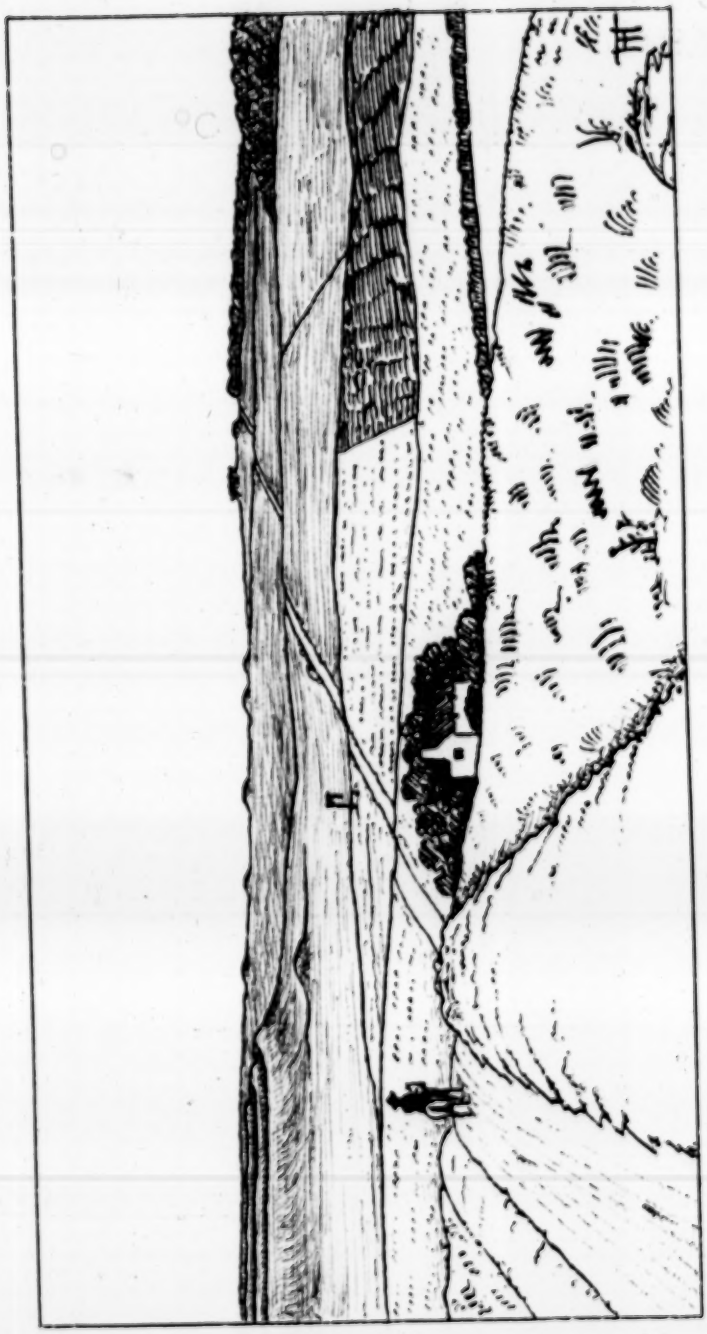
Or, if a lost Love's lips, whom dreams reveal
When midnight imps of King Decay
Delve sly to solve me back to clay,
Should leave some print to prove her spirit-kisses real.

Or, when Earth's Frail lie bleeding of her Strong,
If some Recorder, as in Writ,
Near Whe weary scene should flit
And drop one plume as sign Heaven registers the wrong.

There are who, blest with store of stoic trust
These tokens claim to feel & see,
Read radiant hints of times to be —
Of heart to heart returning after dust to dust.

Such gift is granted not my lost indign.....
I have lain in dead men's beds, have walked
The tombs of those with whom I'd talked
Called many a gone & goodly one to shape a sign,

And panted for response. But none replies;
No warnings ~~fall~~ loom, nor whisperings
To open out my limitings,
And Nescience mutely muses: When a man falls he lies.



My Cicely

"Alive?" — And I leapt in my wonder.
My Was faint of my joyance.
And grasses & grove shone in garments
Of glory to me.

"She lives, in a plenteous well-being.
To-day as aforehand;
The dead bore the name — not a rare one —
That whilom bore She."

She lived..... I, afar in the city
Of frenzy-led factions,
Had squandered green years & manner
In bowing the knee

To Baals illusive & specious,
Till chance had here voiced me
That one I loved vainly in nonage
Had ~~her~~ ceased to be.

The passion the planets had scowled on
And change had let dwindle,
Her death-rumour smartly relighted
To full apogee.

I mounted a steed in the dawning
With a chesped remembrance,
And made for the ancient West-Highway
To far Exonb'ry.

Passing Heaths, & the House of Long Seeging,
I neared the thin steeple
~~That~~ which tops the fair fane of Poore's ancient
Episcopal see;

And, changing anew my onbearer,
I bridded the Downland
Whereon the bleak hillgraves of chieftains
Bulge barren of tree;

And still sadly onward & travelled
That highway Icenian
Which trails its pale ribband down Wessex
O'er lynchet & lea.

By Egdon & Casterbridge ~~straightly~~ lore I,
Where Legions had wayfared,
~~I pottered, to mourn & entomb her~~ To tomb her I deemed sent in silence
By will of the Three
~~Whose star had dazzled me~~.

Triple-ramparted Maidon gloomed grayly
Above me from southward,
And north the hill-fortress of Eggar,
And square Pummerie.

The Nine-Pillared Cromlech, the Bredy,
The Axe, & the Otter
I passed, to the gate of the city
Where Exe scents the sea;

Till, spent, in the graveacre pausing
I learnt 'twas not my Love
To whom Mother Church had just murmured
A last lullaby.

Friday

"Then, where dwells the Canon's kinswoman,
My friend of aforetime?"—
('Twas hard to repress my heart-hearings
And new ecstasy.)

"She wedded."—"Ah!"—"Wedded beneath her—
She keeps the stage-hostel
Ten miles hence, beside the great-Highway—
The ~~Old Trapeze~~ famed Fleur-de-Lis.

"Her spouse was her lackey—no option
'Twixt wedlock & worse things;
A lapse over-sad for a Lady
Of her pedigree!"

I shuddered, said nothing, & wandered
To shades of green laurel:
Too ghastly had grown those first tidings
So brightsome of blee!

For, on my track hither, I'd halted
Awhile at the ~~Hobby~~ Hostel,
And her—her whose name had once opened
My heart as a key—

I'd ~~talked with~~ looked on, unmeeting, & noted
Her jests with the tapsters,
Her liquor-fired face, her thick accents
In naming her fee.

"O God, why this hocus satiric!"
I cried in my anguish:
"O, once loved, O ~~woman corrupted~~ Fair unforgotten —
~~Cox~~ That Thing ~~he~~ — meant it thee!

"Hushed & at peace, lost but sainted,
Were grief I could compass;
Depraved — 'tis for Christ's poor dependent
A cruel decree!"

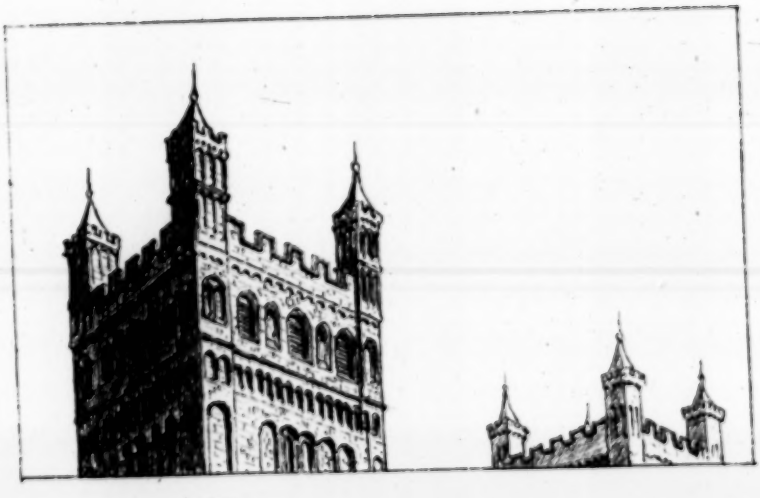
I tracked on the Highway; but passed not
The ~~Hostel~~ Hostel. Within there
Too mocking to Love's re-expression
Was Time's repartee!

Upracking where Legions had wayfared,
By Cromlechs unstoried,
And lynchets, & sepultured Chieftains,
In self-colloquy,

A feeling stirred in me & strong I heard
That she was not my Love,
But she of the garth, who lay rapt in
Her long reverie.

And thence till to-day I persuade me
That this was the true one;
That Time stole intact her young sweetness
And innocent ~~lightsomeness~~ ease.

Tail piece to "My Cicely" - 1



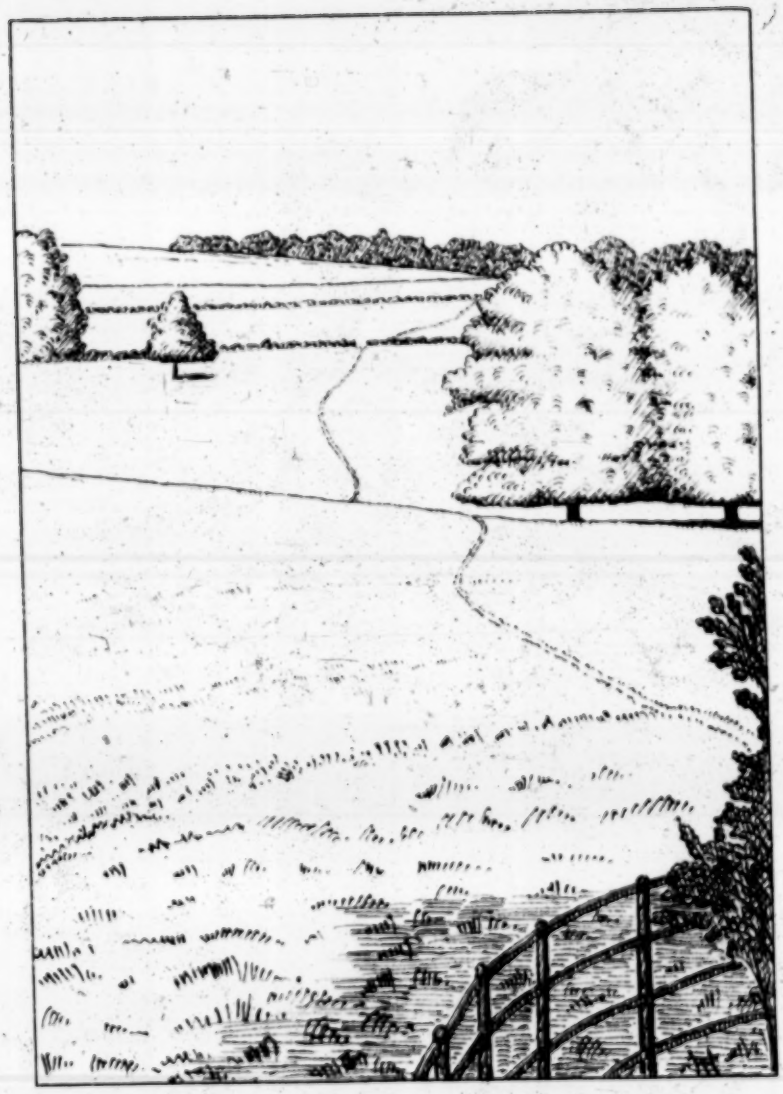
Frail-witted, illudèd they call me;
I may be. 'Tis better
To dream than to own the debasement
Of sweet ~~Rosamond~~ Cicely.

Moreover I rate it unseemly
To hold that kind Heaven
Could work such device — to her ruin
And my misery.

So, lest I disturb my choice vision
I shun the West Highway,
Even now, when the Knaps ring with rhythms
From blackbird & bee;

And feel that with Numbers half-conscious
She rests in the churchyard,
Her spirit unsoiled as in youthtime
When lovers were we.

~~Head-picture~~ to "Her Immortality"



Her Immortality.

Upon a noon I wayfared through
A pasture, mile by mile,
Unto the place where I last saw
My dead Love's living smile.

And sorrowing I lay me down
Upon the heated sod:
It seemed as if my body pressed
The very ground she trod.

I lay, & thought; & in a trance
She came & stood me by—
The same, even to the marvelous ray
That used to light her eye.

"You draw me, & I come to you
My faithful one," she said
In voice that had the moving tone
It bore ere life had sped.

She said: "'Tis seven years since I died:
Few now remember me;
My husband clasps another bride;
My children mothers she.

"My brethren, sisters, & my friends
Care not to meet my sprite:
Who prized me most I did not know
Till I passed down from sight."

I said: "My days are lonely here;
I ~~crave~~ need thy smile alway:
I'll use this night my ball or blade,
And join thee ere the day.

A tremor passed her tender lips,
Which parted to dissuade:
"That cannot be, O friend," she cried;
Think; I am but a shade!

A Shade but in its mindful ones
Has immortality;
By living you keep me alive,
By dying you slay me.

In you resides my single power
Of sweet continuance here;
On your fidelity I count
Through many a coming year."

I started through me at her plight,
So suddenly condensed:
Dismissing late distaste for life
I craved its bleak unrest.

"I will not die, my One of all! —
To lengthen out thy days
I'll guard me from mischief's harms
That may invert my ways!"

She smiled & went. Since then she comes
Oft when her birth-moon climbs,
Or at the seasons' ingresses,
Or August's still noon-times;

But grows my grief. When I surcease,
Through whom alone lives she,
Ceases my Love, her words, her ways,
Never again to be.

4

Hannah

The Ivy-wife.

I longed to love a full-boughed beech
And he as high as he:
I stretched an arm within his reach;
And signalled unity.
But with his drip he forced a breach,
And tried to poison me.

I gave the grasp of partnership
To one of other race—
A plane: he barked him strip by strip
From upper bough to base;
And me therewith; for gone my grip
My arms could not enlace.

In new affection next I clove
To a smooth ash I saw,
And he in trust received my love;
Till, with my soft green claw,
I choked him as I wove & wove....
Such was my love: ha-ha!

By this I gained his strength & height
Without his rivalry.
But in my triumph I lost sight
Of afterclaps. Soon he,
Being dead, decayed, snapped, fell outright,
And in his fall felled me!

A Meeting with Despair.

As evening shaped I found me on a moor
Which sight could scarce sustain:
The black lean land of featureless contour
Was like a tract in pain.

"This scene, like my own life," I said, "is one
Where many glooms abide;
Toned by its fortune to a deadly dun —
Lightless on every side.

I glanced aloft & halted, pleasure-caught
To see the contrast there:
The raylit clouds gleamed glory; & I thought,
"There's solace everywhere!"

Then bitter self-reproaches as I stood
I dealt me silently
As one perverse — misrepresenting Good
In graceless mutiny.

Against the horizon's dim-discerned wheel
A form rose, strange of mould:
That he was hideous, hopeless, I could feel
Rather than could behold.

"'Tis a drear spot, where even the light lies spent
To darkness!" croaked the Thing.
"Not if you look aloft!" said I, intent
On my new reasoning.

"Yes — should you wait awhile!" he cried. "Ho-ho! —
Look now aloft & see!"
I looked. There too sat night. Heavens radiant show
Had gone; & gone had he.

Unknowing.

When, soul in soul reflected,
We breathed an ætherèd air,
When we neglected
All things elsewhere,
And left the friendly friendless
To keep our love aglow,
We deemed it endless.....
— We did not know!

When, by mad passion goaded,
We planned to flee away,
But, unforboded,
The storm-shafts gray
So heavily down-pattered
That none could thenceward go,
Our lives seemed shattered.....
— We did not know!

When I found you, helpless lying,
And you wained my deep misprise,
And swore me, dying,
In phantom-guise
To wing to me when grieving,
And touch away my woe,
We kissed, believing.....
— We did not know!

But though your powers outreckoning,
Your hold you dead & dumb,
Or scorn my beckoning,
And will not come;
And I say, "'Twere mood ungainly
To store her memory so:"
I say it vainly
I feel & know!

But though your powers outreckoning,
Your hold your dead & dumb,
Or scorn my beckoning,
And will not come;
And I say, "'Twere mood ungainly
To store her memory so:"
I say it vainly
I feel & know!

Friends Beyond.

William Dewy, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Ledlow late at plough,
Robert's kin, & Johns, & Ned's,
And the Squire, & Lady Susan, lie in Mellstock churchyard now!

"Gone," I call them, gone for good, that group of local hearts & heads;
Yet at mothy curfew-tide,
And at midnight when the noon-heat breathes it back from walls & leads,

They've a way of whispering to me — fellow-wights who yet abide —
In the muted, measured note
Of a ripple under archways, or a lone cave's stillicide:

"We have triumphed: this achievement turns the bane to antidote,
Unsuccesses to success;
Many ~~pondered~~ thought-worn eyes & morrows ~~hang~~ to a morrow free of thought.

"Thought we need of corn & clothing, know of old terrestrial stress;
Chill detraction stirs no sigh;
Fear of death has even bygone us: death gave all that we possess.

W. D. — "Ye mid burn the world bass-viol that I set such ~~value~~ vallie by."
Squire. — "You may hold the manse in fee
You may wed my spouse, my children's memory of me may decry."

Lady S. — "You may ~~keep~~ have my rich brocades, my laces; take each household key;
Ransack coffer, desk, bureau;
Quiz the few poor treasures hid there, con the letters kept by me."

Farmer.- "Ye mid see my favourite heifer, ye mid let the chorlock grow,
Foul the grinterns, give up thrift."

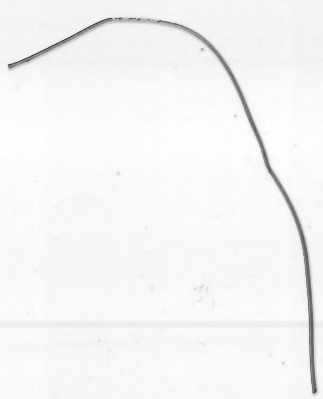
Wife.- "If ye break my best blue china, children, I shant care or ho."

All. - "We've no wish to hear the tidings, how the peoples fortunes shift;
What your daily doings are;
Who are wedded, born, divided; if your lives beat slow or swift.

"Curious not the least are we if our intents you make or mar,
If you quire to our old tune,
If the City stage still passes, if the weirs still roar afar".

— Thus, with very gods' composure, read those crosses late & soon
Which, in life, the Trine allow'd
(Why, none writeth), & ignoring all that hapes beneath the moon,

William Dewy, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Ledlow late at plough;
Robert's kin, & John's, & Ned's,
And the Squire, & Lady Susan, murmur mildly to me now.



To External Nature.

Show thee as I thought thee
When I early sought thee,
Sorrow-scouting,
Never doubting
Love alone had wrought thee —

But such re-adorning
Time forbids with scorning —
Makes me see things
Cease the things
They were in my morning.

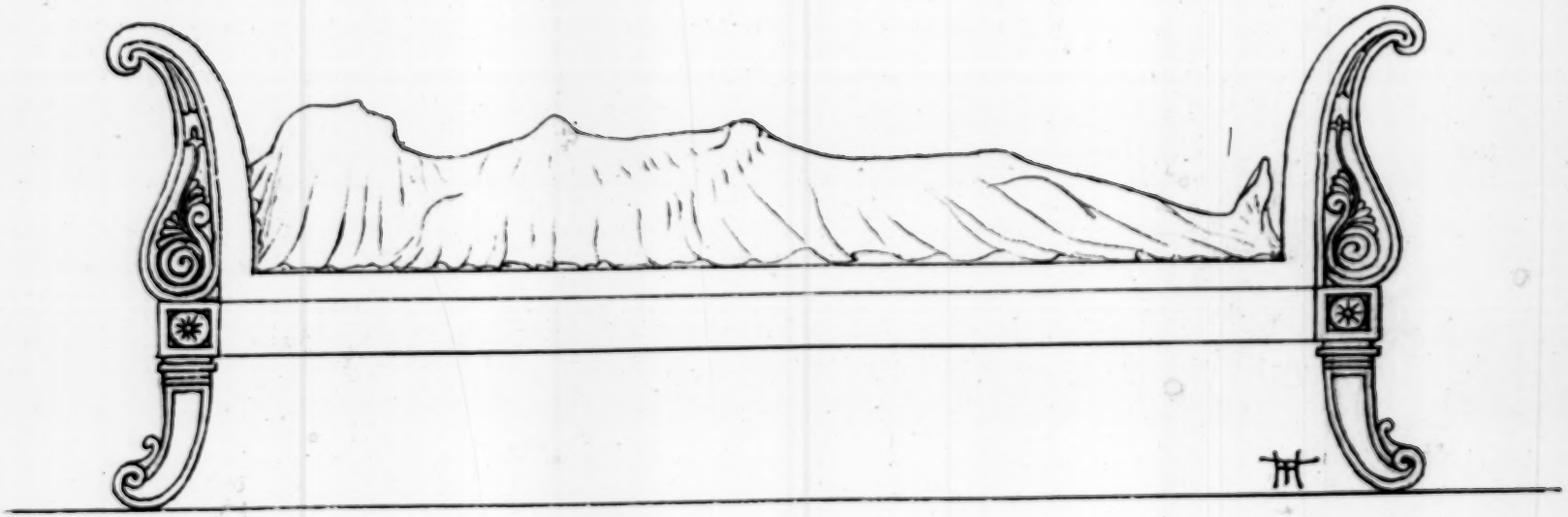
Wrought thee for our pleasure,
Planned thee as a measure
For expounding
And resounding
Glad things ~~in for our keeping~~ that men treasure.

Fad'st thou, glow-forsaken,
Darkness overtaken;
Thy first sweetness,
Radiance, meetness,
Gone shall reawaken.

O for but a moment
Of that old endowment —
Light to gaily
See thy daily
Prisèd embowment!

Why not sempiternal
Thou & I? Our vernal
Brightness keeping,
Time outleaping;
Passed the hodiernal!

Illustration to "Not a line of her writing have I" Diminish to half the length - more or less



A 46-99

79

T——a.

At news of her death.

Not a line of her writing have I,
Not a thread of her hair,
No mark of her late time, her ~~dwelling~~ bower, her ~~latice~~ lattice, whereby
I may image her there;
And in vain do I urge my insight
To conceive my lost prize
In her close, whom I knew when her dreams were upbrimming with light,
And with laughter her eyes.

What scenes spread around her last days,
Sad, sharp, or serene?
Did the Fates & Affections combine to embow her sweet ways
With an irisèd sheen?
Or did lifelight decline from her years,
And mischances control
Her full daystar; unease, or regret, or forebodings, or fears
Disennoble her soul?

Thus I ~~have~~ do but the vision ~~to clasp~~ retain
Of the maiden of yore
As my relic; yet haply the best of her — fined in my ~~grasp~~ brain
It may be the more
That no line of her writing have I,
Nor a thread of her hair,
No mark of her late time, her ~~life at~~ bower, her ~~dwelling~~ latice, whereby
I may image her there

March, 1890

Middle-age Enthusiasms.

To M. H.

We passed where flag o flower
Signalled a jocund throng;
We said: "Go to, the hour
Is apt!" — & joined the song;
And, kindling, laughed at life & care,
Although we knew no laugh lay there.

We walked where shy birds stood
Watching us, wonder-dumb;
Their friendships met our mood;
We cried: "We'll often come:
We'll come morn, noon, eve, everywhen!"
— We doubted we should come again.

We joyed to see strange ~~gleams~~ sheens
Leap from quaint leaves in shade;
A secret light of greens
They'd for their pleasure made.
We said: "We'll plant such growths as these!"
— We knew with night the wish would cease.

"So sweet the place", we said,
"Its taciturn tales so dear,
Our thoughts, when breath has sped,
Will meet & mingle here!"...
"Words!" mused we. "Passed the mortal door,
This work will know our thoughts no more."

In a Wood.

vide "The Woodlanders".

Pale beech & pine-tree blue,
Set in one clay,
Bough to bough cannot you
Bide out your day?
When the rains skim & skip
Why mar sweet comradeship,
Blighting with poisoned drip
Neighbourly spray?

Touches from ash, O wych,
Sting you like scorn!
You, too, brave hollies, twitch
Sidelong from thorn.
Even the rank poplars bear
Ill by a rival's air,
Cankering in black despair
If overborne.

Heart-halt & spirit-lame,
City-oppprest,
Unto this wood I came
As to a nest;
Deeming that sylvan peace
Offered my soul release —
Nature a soft surcease
To man's unrest.

Since, then, no grace I find
Taught me of trees,
Turn I back to my kind,
Worthy as these.
There at ~~least~~ least smiles abound,
~~are found~~,
There discourse trills around,
There, ~~occasionally~~ now & then, are found
Life-loyalties.

1887 : 1896.

But, having entered in,
Great growths & small
~~[illegible]~~
Show them
~~[illegible]~~ to men akin —
Combatants all!
Sycamore shoulders oak,
Bines the slim saplings yoke,
Ivy-spun hallers choke
Elms stout & tall.

Oxford Gazette

To Lady ——.

Offended by something the author had written.

Now that my page upcloses, doomed, maybe,
Never to press thy cosy cushions more,
Or wake thy ready yeas as heretofore,
Or stir thy gentle vows of faith in me:

Knowing thy natural susceptivity
I figure that, as flambeaux banish eve,
My sombre image, warped by invidious heave
Of those less forthright, must lose place in thee.

So be it. I have borne such. Let thy dreams
Of me & mine diminish day by day,
And ~~grow~~ cede their space to shine of smugger things:
Till I shape to thee but in pitiful gleams,
And then in far & feeble visitings,
And then surcease. Truth will be truth always!

To an Orphan Child.

Ah, Child, thou art but half thy darling mother's;
Hers couldst thou wholly be
My light in thee would onglow all in others;
She would relive to me.
But niggard Nature's trick of birth
Bars, lest she overjoy,
Renewal of the Loved on earth
Save with alloy.

The Dame has no regard, alas, my maiden,
For love & loss like mine —
No sympathy with mindsight memory-laden;
Only with fickle eyne!
To her mechanic artistry
My dreams are all unknown,
And why I wish that thou couldst be
But One's alone.

H

Nature's Questioning.

When I look forth at dawning, pool,
Field, flock, & lonely tree,
All seem to look at me
Like chastened children, sitting silent in a school;

Their faces dulled, constrained, & worn,
As though the master's ways
Through the long teaching days
Their first terrestrial zest had chilled & overborne.

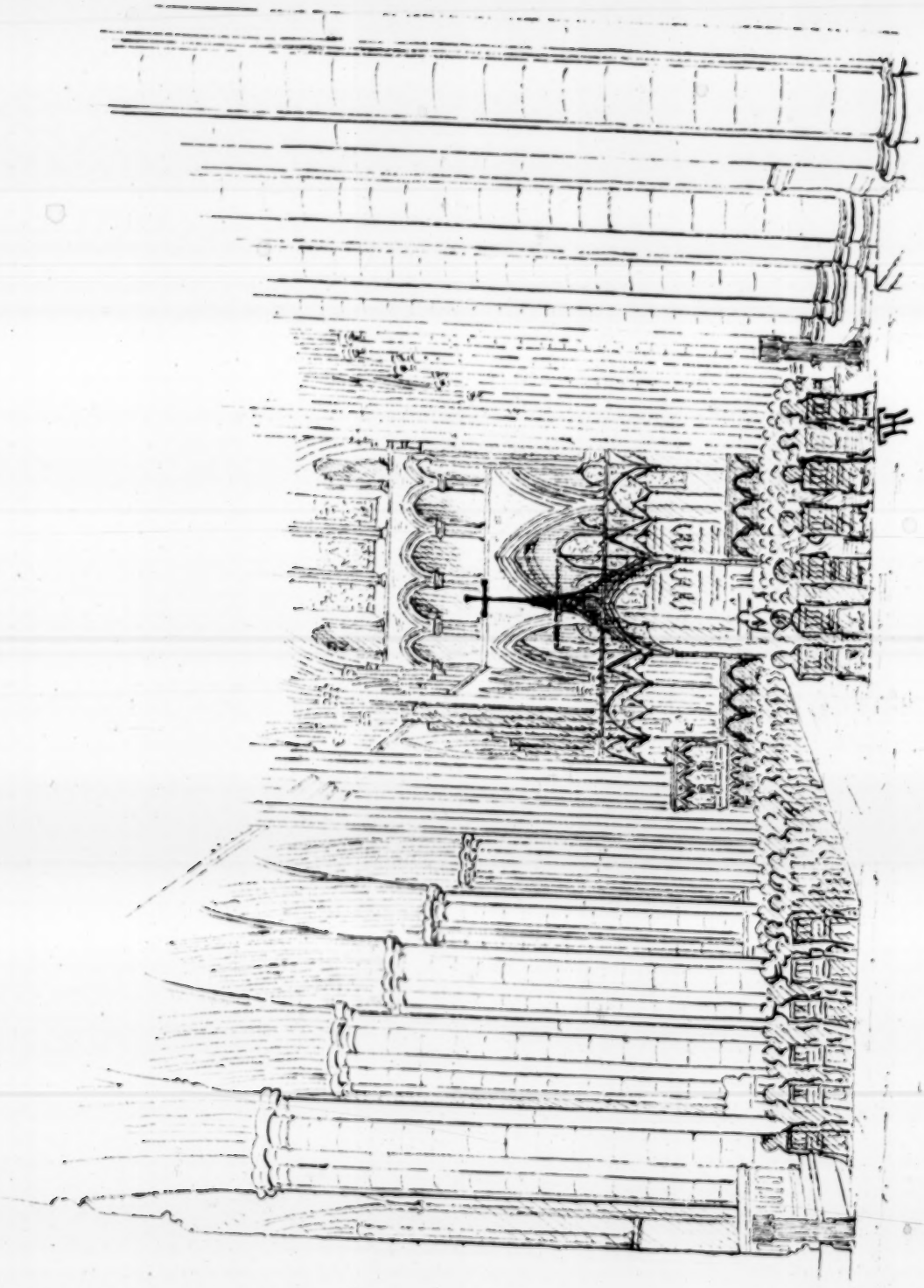
And on them stirs, in lippings mere —
(As if once clear in call,
But now scarce breathed at all)
"We wonder, ever wonder, why we find us here!

"Has some Vast Imbecility,
Mighty to build & blend,
But impotent to tend,
Framed us in jest, & left us now to hazardry?

"Or come we of an Automaton
Unconscious of our pains?...
Or are we live remains
Of Godhead dying downwards, brain & eye now gone?

"Or is it that some high Plan belides,
As yet not understood,
Of Evil stormed by Good,
We the Forlorn Hope over which Achievement strides?"

Thus things around. No answerer I....
Meanwhile the winds, & rains,
And Earth's old glooms & pains
Are still the same, & gladdest Life dawns but to die.



The Impercipient.

(Evensong; —— Cathedral.)

That from this bright believing band
An outcast I should be,
That faiths by which my comrades stand
Seem fantasies to me,
And ~~mirage myth~~ mirage, mist their Happy Land,
Is a drear destiny.

Why thus my ~~my~~ soul should be consigned
To infelicity,
Why always I must feel as blind
To bliss my neighbours see;
Why joys they've found I cannot find,
Abides a mystery.

Since heart of mine knows not that ease
Which they know; since it be
That He who ~~one~~ breathes All's Well to these
Breathes no All's-Well to me,
My loss might move their sympathies
And Christian charity!

But ah, they love me not, although
I treat them tenderly,
And while I bear with them they go
To no such length with me,
Because — to match their sight I show
An incapacity.

I am like a gazer who should mark
An inland company
Standing upfingered, with "Hark; Hark;
The glorious distant sea!"
And feel, "Alas, 'tis but yon dark
And wind-swept pine to me!"

Yet I would bear my shortcomings
With meet tranquility,
But for the charge that blessed things
I'd rather to unbe.
O, doth a bird deprived of wings
Go earthbound wilfully?

. . . . . .

Enough. As yet confusion clings
About us. We shall see.

At an Inn.

When we as strangers sought
Their ~~flattering~~ care,
Veiled smiles bespoke their thought
Of what we were.
They warmed as they opined
Us more than friends —
That we had all resigned
For Love's dear ends.

And that swift sympathy
With living love
Which quickens the ~~earth~~ world — maybe
~~All~~ The spheres ~~earthen~~ above,
Made them our ministers,
Moved them to say,
"Ah God, that bliss like theirs
Would flush our day!"

And we were left alone
As Love's own pair;
Yet never the love-light shone
Between us there;
But that which chilled the breath
Of afternoon,
And palsied unto death
The pane-fly's tune.

~~1899~~

The kiss mein zeal foretold
And now deemed come,
Came not: within his hold
Love lingered numb.
Why cast he on our port
A ~~bloom~~ bloom not ours?
Why shaped us for his sport
In after-hours?

As we seemed we were not
That day eyer.
And now we seem not what
We aching are.
O severing sea or land,
O laws of men,
~~Let~~ ~~find~~ ~~too~~, Ere death, ~~to~~ once let us stand
As we stood then!

The Slow Nature.

An incident of Froom Valley.

"Thy husband—poor, poor Heart!—is dead—
Dead, out by Moreford Rise;
A bull escaped the barton-shed,
Gored him; & there he lies!"

"Ha, ha—go away! 'Tis a tale, methink,
Thou joker Kit!" laughed she.
I've known thee many a year, Kit Twink,
And ever hast thou fooled me!"

"But Mistress Damon—I can swear
~~Thy~~ goodman John is dead!
And soon th'lt hear their feet who bear
His body to his bed."

So unwontedly sad was the merry man's face—
That face which had long deceived—
That she gazed & gazed; & then could trace
The truth there; & she believed.

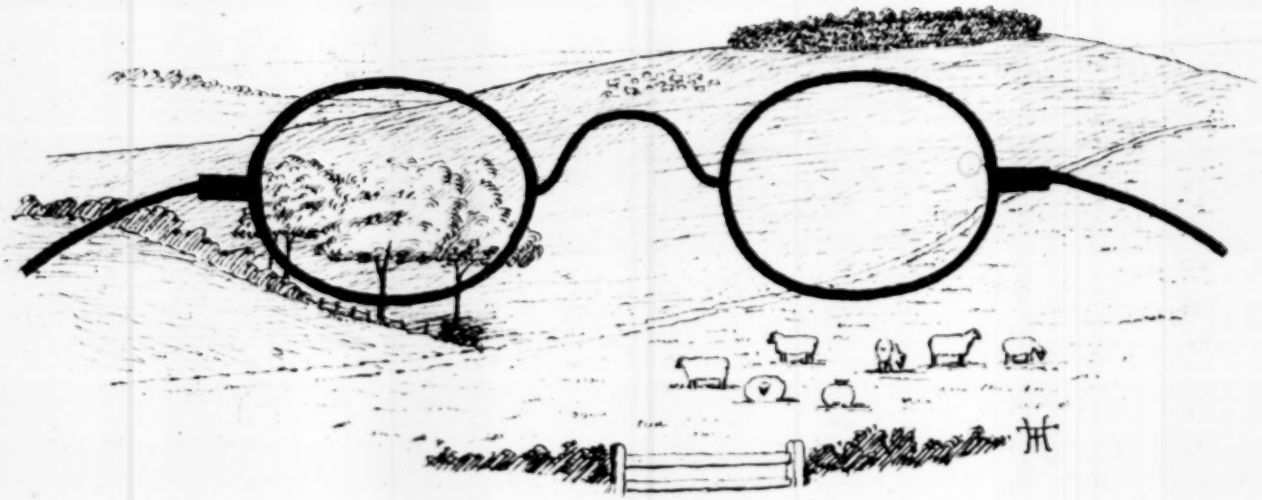
She laid a hand on the dresser-ledge,
And glanced at ~~the~~ far Egdon-~~butt~~-side;
And stood; & you heard the wind-swept sedge
And the rippling Froom; till she cried:

"O my ~~her~~ chamber's untidied, unmade my bed,
Though the day has begun to wear!
'What a slovenly hussif!' it will be said,
When they all go up my stair!"

She disappeared; & the joker stood
Depressed by his neighbour's doom;
And amazed that ~~the~~ a wife ~~was~~ struck in widowhood
Thought first of her unkempt room.

But a fortnight thence she could ~~not~~ take no food,
And she pined in a slow decay;
While Kit soon lost his mournful mood
And laughed in his ~~wonted~~ ancient way.

1894.



Fenlands

In a Eweleaze near Weatherbury.

The years ~~are gathered~~ have gathered grayly.
Since I danced upon this leaze
With one who ~~~~ kindled daily
Love's fitful ecstasies!
But despite the term as teacher
I remain what I was then
In each essential feature
Of the fantasies of men.

Yet I mark the little chisel
Of never nodding Time
~~Bescraping~~ Defacing ghast & grizzel
The blazon of my prime.
When at night he thinks me sleeping
I feel him boring sly
Within my bones, & heaping
Quaintest pains for by & by.

Still, I'd go the world with Beauty,
I would laugh with her & sing,
I would shun Divinest duty
To resume her worshipping.
But she'd scorn my brave endeavour,
She would not balm the breeze
With "Love I'm mine for ever!"
As she did upon this leaze.

1890.

ADDENDA.

The Fire at Tranter Sweatley's.

They had long met o' Zundays – her true-love & she –
And at junketings, maypoles, & flings;
But she bode wi' a thirtover muncle, & he
Swore by noon & by night that her goodman should be
Naibour Sweatley – a ~~man often~~ gaffer oft weak at the knee
From taking o' sommat more cheerful than tea –
Who tranted, & moved people's things.

She cried, "O pray pity me!" Nought would he hear;
Then with wild raving eyes she obeyed.
She chid when her Love was for clinking off wi' her:
The pa'son was told, as the season drew near
To ~~flow~~ throw over pu'pit the names of the peäir
As fitting one flesh to be made.

The wedding-day dawned & the morning drew on;
The couple stood bridegroom & bride;
The evening was passed, & when midnight had gone
The folks horned out "God save the King", & anon
The twain homealong gloomily hied.

The lover Jim Tankens mourned heart-sick & drear
To be thus of his darling deprived:
He roamed in the dark ath'art field, mound, & mere,
And, a'most without knowing it, found himself near
The house of the tranter, & now of his Dear,
Where the lantern-light showed 'em arrived.

The bride sought her cham'mer so calm & so pale
That a Northern had thought her resigned;
But, to eyes that had seen her in seasons o' weal,
Like the white cloud o' smoke, the red battlefield's vail,
That look spak' of havoc behind.

The bridegroom yet laitered a beaker to drain,
Then reeled to the linhay for more,
When the candle-snoff kindled ~~the~~ some chaff from his grain —
Flames spread, & red clankers, wi' might & wi' main,
And round beams, thatch, & chimley-tun roar.

Young Tim away yonder, aroused ~~yondered & aroused~~ by the light
Through brimble & underwood tears,
Till he comes to the orchet, when crooping there right
In the lewth of a codlin-tree, bivering wi' fright,
Wi' ~~naught but~~ on'y her night-rail to screen her from sight,
His litsome young Barbree appears.

Her cold little buzzom half-naked he views
Played about by the frolicsome breeze,
Her light-tripping tottles, her ten little toves,
All bare & besprinkled wi' Fall's chilly dews,
While her great gallied eyes through her ringlets ~~s~~ let loose
Sheened like stars through a tardle o' trees.

She eyed en; &, as when a weir-hatch is drawn,
Her tears, penned by terror afore,
With a rushing of sobs in a shower were strawn,
Till her power to pour 'em seemed wasted & gone
From the theft o' misfortune she bore.

"O Tim, my <u>own</u> Tim I must call 'ee – I will!
All the world ha' turned round on me so!
Can you help her who loved 'ee,
~~Heaven so keep you & help you~~, though acting so ill?
Can you pity her misery – feel for her still?
When worse than her body so quivering & chill
Is her heart in its winter o' woe!

"I think I mid almost ha' borne it," she said,
(Had my griefs one by one come to hand:
But O, to be slave to thik husbird for bread,
And then, upon top o' that, driven to wed,
And then, upon top o' that, burnt out o' bed,
Is more than my nater can stand!"

Tim's soul like a lion 'ithin en ~~up~~ out sprung –
(Tim had a great soul when his feelings were wrung)
"Feel for 'ee, dear Barbree?" he cried;
And his warm working-jacket about her he flung,
Made a back, horsed her up till behind him she clung:
Like a chiel on a gipsy her figure uphung
As the two sleeves afore him he tied.

Over piggeries, & mixens, & apples, & hay,
They lumpered straight into the night;
And finding ~~at length~~ bylong where a halter-path lay
By dawn reached Tim's house, on'y zeed on their way
By a naibour or two who were up wi' the day;
But they gathered no clue to the sight.

Then tender Jim Jenkens he searched here & there
For some garment to clothe her fair skin;
But though he had breeches & waistcoats to spare
He had nothing quite seemly for Barbree to wear,
Who, half scrammed to death, stood & cried on a chair
At the caddle she found herself in.

There was one thing to do, & that one thing he did,
He lent her some clouts of his own,
And she took 'em perforce; & while in 'em she slid
Jim turned to the winder, as modesty bid,
Thinking "O that the picter my duty keeps hid
To the sight o' my eyes mid be shown!"

In the tallet he stowed her; there hidied she lay
Suiting sleeves, legs, & tails to her limbs,
But most o' the time in a terrible way,
Well knowing that there'd be the devil to pay
If 'twere found that, instead o' the elements' prey
She were living in lodgings at Jim's.

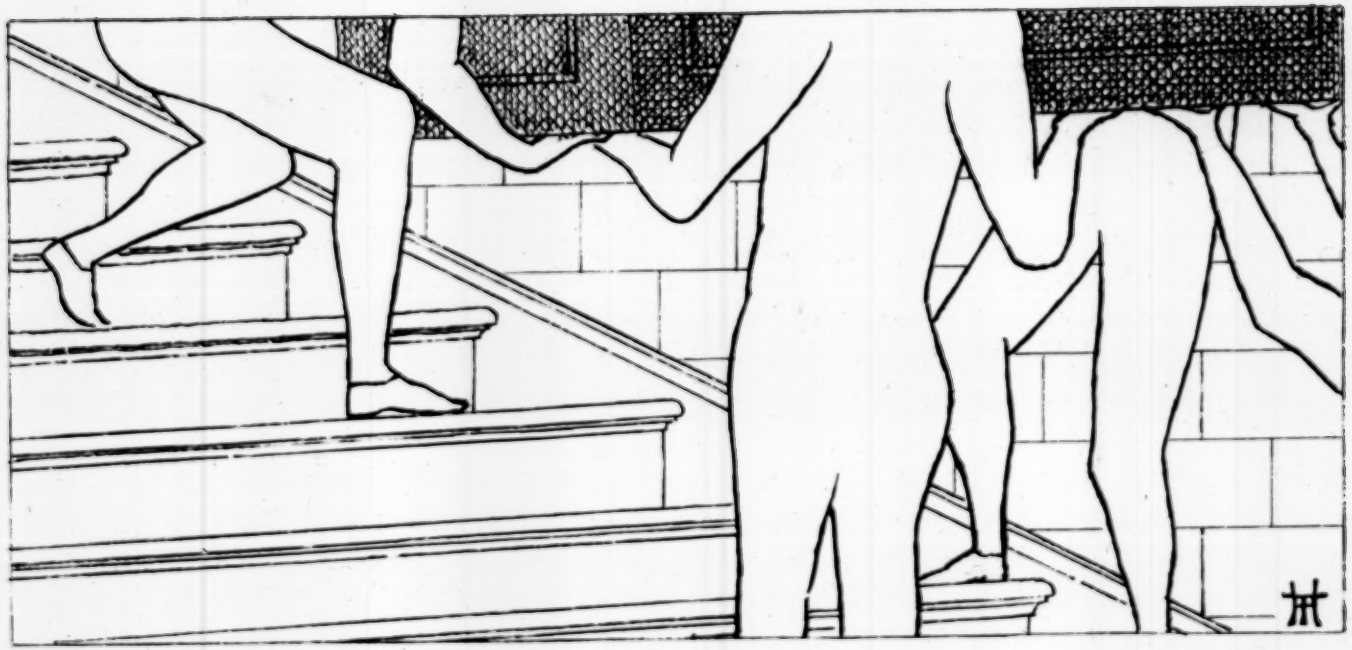
"Where's the Granter?" said men & boys; "where can er be be?"
"Where's the Granter?" said Barbree alone
"Where on e'th is the Granter?" said everybod-y:
They sifted the dust of his perished roof-tree,
And all they could find was a bone.

7

Then the uncle cried, "Lord, pray have mercy on me!"
And in terror began to repent:
But before 'twas complete, & till sure she was free,
Barbree drew up her loft-ladder, light turned her key —
Tim bringing up breakfast & dinner & tea —
Till the news of her hiding got vent.

There followed the custom-kept rout, shout, & flare
Of a skimmington-ride through the naibourhood, ere
Folk had proof of old Sweatley's decay:
Whereupon decent people all stood in a stare,
Saying Tim & his lodger should rush it, & pair:
So he took her to church. An' some laughing-lads there
Cried to Tim, "After Sweatley!" She said, "I declare
I stand as a maiden to-day!"

Written, 1867: printed 1874.



Heiress & Architect.

To A.W.B.

She sought the Studios, beckoning to her side
An arch-designer, for she planned to build.
He was of wise contrivance, deeply skilled
In every intervolve of high & wide —
Well fit to be her guide.

"Whatever it be,"
Responded he,
With cold clear voice & cold clear view,
"In true accord with prudent fashionings
For such vicissitudes as living things,
And thwarting not the law of stable things,
That will I do."

"Shape me", she said, "a pile of light degree
With open lattice-work, that scent & hue
Of buds, & travelling bees, may come in through,
The note of birds, & singings of the sea,
For these are much to me."

"An idle whim!"
Broke forth from him
Whom nought could warm to gallantries:
"Cede all these buds & birds, the Zephyr's call,
And scents, & hues, & things that falter all,
And choose as best the close & surly wall,
For winters freeze."

"Then frame", she cried, "wide fronts of crystal glass,
That I may show my laughter & my light —
Light like the suns by day, the stars' by night —
Till rival heart-queens, envying, wail, 'Alas
Her glory!' as they pass."

"O maid misled!"
He sternly said
Whose ~~eyesight~~ facile foresight pierced her dire:
"Where shall abide the soul when, sick of glee,
It shrinks, & hides, & prays no eye may see?
Those house them best who house for secrecy.
For you will tire."

"A little chamber then, with swan & dove
Ranged thickly, & engrailed with rare device
Of reds & purples, for a Paradise
Wherein my Love may greet me, I my Love,
When he shall know thereof?"

"This, too, is ill";
He answered still,
He man ~~whose fancy strayed~~ who swayed her like a shade.
"An hour will come when sight of such sweet-mouth
Would bring a bitterness too sharp to brook,
When brighter eyes have won away his look;
For you will fade."

Then said she faintly: "O contrive some way—
Some narrow winding turret, quite mine own,
To reach a loft where I may grieve alone!
It is a slight thing; then do not, I pray,
This last dear fancy stay!"

"Such winding ways
Fit not your days"
Said he, the man of measuring eye;
"I must even fashion as my rule declares,
To wit: Give space (since Life ends unawares)
To hale a coffined corpse adown the stairs;
For you will die."

1867.

C Walker

II

The World's Verdict

a Morality-rime.

There were two ~~men~~ youths of equal age,
Wit, station, strength & parentage:
They studied at the selfsame schools,
And shaped their thoughts by common rules.

One pondered on the life of man,
His hopes, his ending, & began
To ~~deem~~ rate the Market's sordid war
As something scarce worth living for.

"I'll brace Whigher aims," said he,
"I'll further Truth & Purity;
Thereby to mend the mortal lot
And sweeten sorrow. Thrive I not,

Winning their hearts my kind will give
Enough that I may lowly live,
And house my Love in some ~~snug~~ dim dell,
For pleasing them & theirs so well.

Idly attired, with features wan
In secret swift he laboured on:
Such press of power had brought much gold
applied to things of meaner mould.

Sometimes he wished his aims had been
To gather gains like other men;
Then thanked his God he'd traced his track
So far no wish could drag him back.

He looked from his loft one day
To where his slighted garden lay;
Nettles & hemlock hid each lawn,
And every flower was starved & gone.

He fainted in his heart, whereon
He rose, & sought his plighted one,
Resolved to loose her bond withal,
Lest she should perish in his fall.

He met her with a careless air,
As though he'd ceased to find her pair,
And said: "True love is dust to me;
I cannot kiss: I tire of thee!"

(That she might scorn him was he pain.
To put her sooner out of pain:
For incensed love breathes quick & dies,
When famished love a lingering lies.)

Once done, his soul was so betossed
It found no more the force it lost:
Hope was his only drink & food,
And hope extinct decay ensued.

And, living long so closely penned,
He had not kept a single friend;
He dismissed them as phantoms be,
And drooped & death in poverty.....

Meantime his schoolmate had gone out
To join the fortune-finding rout,
He liked the winnings of the mart,
~~to~~ But wearied of the working part.

He turned ~~sought~~ to seek a privy lair,
Neglecting note of ~~head~~ garb & hair,
And day by day reclined & thought
How he might live by doing nought.

"I plan a valued scheme" he said
To some. "But lend me of your head,
And when the vast result ~~looms~~ booms nigh
In profit you shall stand as I."

Yet they took counsel to restrain
Their kindness till they saw the gain;
And, since his substance now had run,
He rose to ~~feed~~ do what might be done.

He went unto his Love by night,
And said: "My Love, I faint in fight:
Deserving as thou dost ~~to~~ a crown,
My cares shall never drag thee down."

(He had deserted a maid whose line
Would hand her down much corn & wine,
And held her fair in worth above
One who could only pray & love)

Fowler

But his Fair ~~one~~ read him; whence he failed
To do the deed ~~thing~~ so blithely hailed:
He saw his projects wholly marred,
And gloom & want oppressed him hard;

Till, living to so mean an end,
~~He lost thereby~~ Whereby he'd lost his every friend,
~~A pauper poor he sank to die~~, He perished in a pauper sty,
His mate the ~~pauper dead hard by~~ dying pauper nigh.

And ~~slanderers by~~ moralists, reflecting, said,
As "dust to dust" in burial read
Was echoed from each coffin-lid,
"These men were like in all they did."

1866.

Lines

Spoken by Miss Ada Rehan at the Lyceum Theatre, July 23. 1890 at a performance on behalf of Lady Jeune's Holiday Fund for City Children.

Before we part to alien thoughts & aims,
Permit me one brief word the occasion claims:
— When mumming & grave projects are allied,
Perhaps an Epilogue is justified.

Our under-purpose has, in truth, to-day
Commanded most our musings; least the play:
A purpose futile but for your good-will
Promptly responsive to the cry of ill:
A purpose all too limited! — to aid
Frail human floweretes, sicklied by the shade,
In winning some short spell of upland breeze,
Or strengthening sunlight on the level leas.

Who has not marked, where the full cheek should be,
Incipient lines of lank flaccidity,
Lymphatic pallor where the pink should glow,
And where the throb of transport, pulses low? —
Most tragical of shapes from Pole to Line,
O wondering child, unwitting Time's design,
Why should man add to Nature's cruelty,
And worsen ill by thus immuring thee?
That races
~~Nature~~ can do despite to their own,
That
might supernal do indeed condone
Wrongs individual for the general ease,
Instance the proof in victims such as these.

Launched into thoroughfares too thronged before,
Mothered by those whose protest is "No more!"
Vitalized without option: who shall say
That did Life hang on choosing — Yea or Nay —
They had not scorned it with such penalty,
And nothingness implored of Destiny?

And yet behind the horizon smile serene
The down, the cornland, & the stretching green —
Space — the child's heaven: scenes which at least ensure
Some palliative for ill they cannot cure.

Dear friends — now moved by this poor show of ours
To make your own long joy in buds & bowers
For one brief while the joy of infant eyes,
Changing their urban murk to paradise —
You have our thanks! — may your reward include
More than our thanks, far more: their gratitude.

H0 88

"I look into my Glass."

I look into my glass,
And view my wasting skin,
And say, "Would God it came to pass
My heart had shrunk as thin!"

For then, I, undistrest
By friendships lost to me,
Could lonely wait my endless rest
With equanimity.

But Time, to make me grieve,
Part steals, lets part abide,
And shakes this fragile frame at eve
With throbbings of noon tide.

Glossary of Local words
(to be sent)

The End